





THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

JOHN HOLSTROM-











THE VERSES OF  
JAMES W. FOLEY









SONG OF SUMMER DAYS

# BOYS AND GIRLS

THE VERSES OF  
JAMES W. FOLEY



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TO MY WIFE



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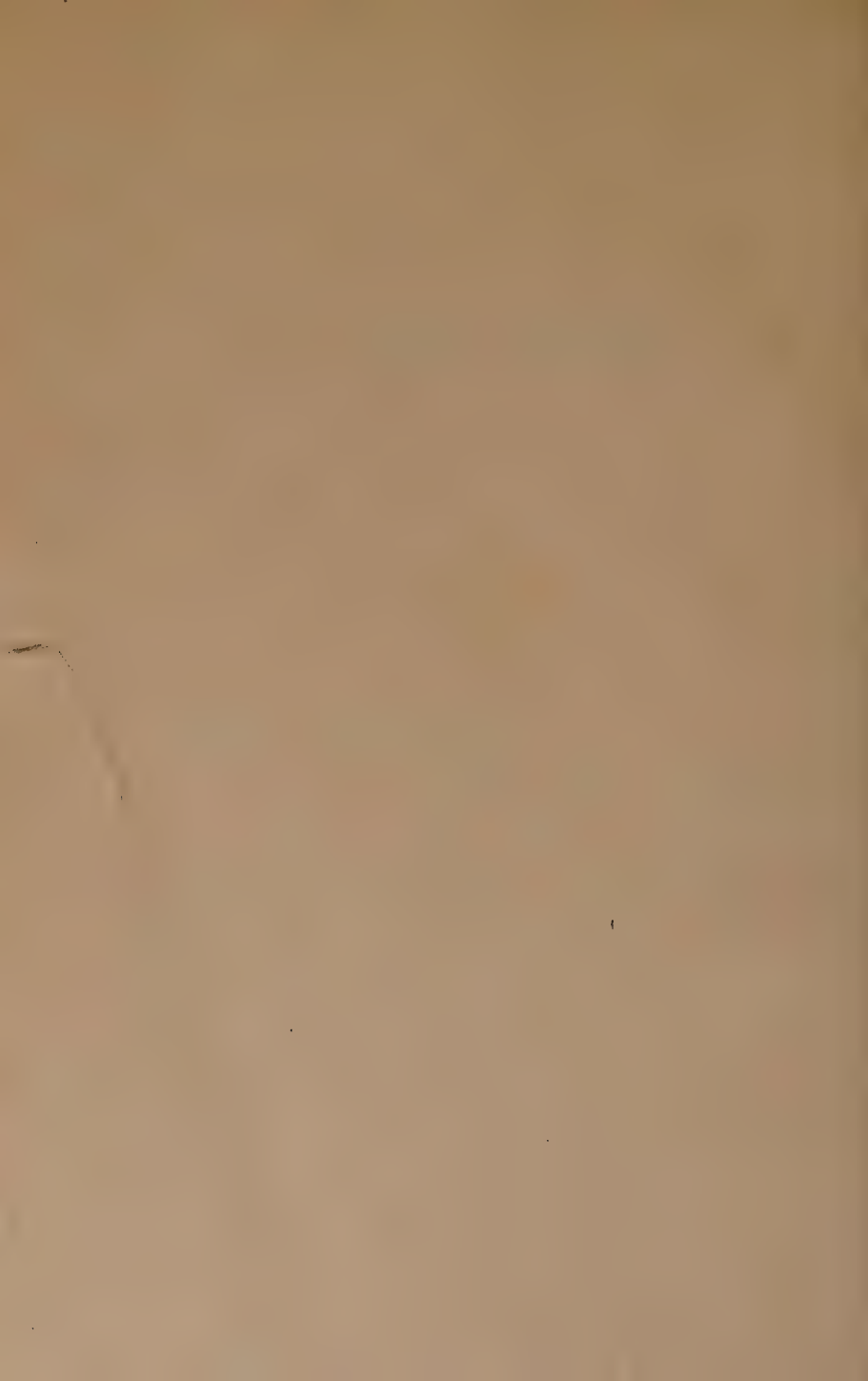
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BY REGINALD BIRCH

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## BOYS AND GIRLS



# BOYS AND GIRLS

## AWAY

“I WON’T be long,” the Little Boy said,  
As he clattered him down the stair,  
And found him a hat for his curly head  
And called to a dog somewhere.  
Then off like a flash down the shady lane  
With a whistle and cry and song;  
And back to us ever it came again:  
“I won’t be gone very long.”

“I won’t be long,” the Little Boy said,  
As we saw him among the trees,  
His eyes all bright and his cheeks all red,  
A friend of the birds and bees;  
Then through the hedges and out of the gate,  
For naught in the world goes wrong  
With a boy of six or seven or eight —  
“I won’t be gone very long.”

“I won’t be long,” the Little Boy said,  
“I’m just going out to play.”  
And the curly dog barked and the two of them sped  
Over the clover away.  
He waved us a kiss with a little brown hand



And cries rose from here and there,  
For oh, but a boy does understand  
A dog and the open air!

"I won't be long," the Little Boy said,  
"Don't wait any supper — you see,  
I'll just have a bowl of milk and bread  
And my dog he will eat with me."  
Then he swung his hat on its tangled string  
Till the curly dog wagged his tail  
And romped and played like a boy in spring  
And barked him a comrade's hail.

"I won't be long," the Little Boy said —  
Oh, Mother of him, don't cry!  
The leaves come green again, yellow and red,  
And the years and the years go by.  
But sometime he'll come, as we've seen him do,  
With the bark of a dog and a song,  
For it must be true — oh, it must be true  
That he'll not be gone very long!

## THE RECIPROCITY OF SMILES

SOMETIMES I wonder why they smile so  
pleasantly at me,  
And pat my head when they pass by as friendly  
as can be;

Sometimes I wonder why they stop to tell me How-  
d'-do,

And ask me then how old I am and where I'm going  
to;

And ask me can I spare a curl and say they used to  
know

A little girl that looked like me, oh, years and years  
ago;

And I told Mamma how they smiled and asked her  
why they do,

So she said if you smile at folks they always smile  
at you.

I never knew I smiled at them when they were going  
by,

I guess it smiled all by itself and that's the reason  
why;

I just look up from playing if it's any one I know  
And they most always smile at me and maybe say  
Hello;

And I can smile at any one, no matter who or  
where,

## 6 THE RECIPROCITY OF SMILES

Because I'm just a little girl with lots of them to  
spare;  
And Mamma said we ought to smile at folks, and if  
you do  
Most always they feel better and they smile right  
back at you.

And when so many smile at me and ask me for a  
curl  
It makes me think most everybody likes a little girl;  
And once when I was playing and a man was going  
by  
He smiled at me and then he rubbed some dust out  
of his eye,  
Because it made it water so, and said he used to  
know  
A little girl up in his yard who used to smile just so;  
And then I asked why don't she now and then he  
said "You see —"  
And then he rubbed his eye again and only smiled  
at me.

## A DOMESTIC RIPPLE

SOME days my Pa is thist so cross  
    'At Ma, she snaps him off an' said:  
    "I guess your father must 'a' got  
    Up on th' wrong side of th' bed."  
An' 'en Pa says he'd like to eat  
    Thist bread, he would, in peace once more;  
An' Ma, she bu'sts out cryin' nen  
    An' Pa goes out an' slams th' door —  
    An' 'en I git a spankin'!

Thist 'fore he gits his breakfast, Pa  
    He never hardly speaks to us,  
An' Ma, she says it shames her so  
    T' have him go an' make a fuss  
Before th' girl. Pa, he don't care,  
    An' 'en he says — "Th' girl be ——!"  
An' Ma says — "Oh, t' think he'd swear  
    Before his child!" Th' door gits slammed —  
    An' 'en I git a spankin'!

An' 'en, 'em days, th' littlest things  
    I do 'll almost drive her wild,  
An' she says "Goodness sakes alive!  
    Was ever such another child?"  
An' she says: "Do run out an' play!"  
    An' thist when I git started, nen

## A DOMESTIC RIPPLE

She hollers right at me this way:

“Willyum! You march right in again!”

An’ ’en I git a spankin’!

An’ Pa, he don’t come home to lunch

’Cuz Ma, she says he’s too ashamed

To face her after such a scene

An’ says she surely can’t be blamed

For Pa’s mean, ugly, hateful ways,

An’ Ma ain’t got no heart to eat,

Nen, thist ’cuz I want honey on

My bread, er jam, er sumpin sweet —

Why nen I git a spankin’!

An’ ’en, along ’bout supper time

Pa sneaks in thist th’ easiest

You ever see; an’ nen he looks

For Ma; an’ she’s th’ freeziest

’At ever was. An’ Pa, he’s got

Some candy an’ he says he’s ’shamed,

An’ fin’ly Ma says mebbe she

Was also partly to be blamed,

An’ ’en ’at ends my spankin’!

## THE ADAMS'S BOYS

**T**HE Adams's children, they just romp and  
play  
And fall out of trees in the carelessst way,  
And might break their legs from the way that they  
fall,  
But they get up laughing and not hurt at all,  
'Cause boys' bones are soft, so their grandfather said;  
And John Quincy Adams, he stands on his head  
And drinks from a dipper, and all over town  
The boys will tell you how he drinks upside down.

The Adams's children, they make enough noise  
In the yard where they live for three times as much  
boys,  
And sometimes they laugh and you hear it as clear  
As can be up to Tinker's and way over here;  
And they've got a dog which is almost the same  
As the rest of the boys and will play every game,  
And bark all the time, and he makes so much noise  
He's just like the rest of the Adams's boys.

The Adams's children, they go out to ride  
On a pony of theirs, with them all three astride,  
And the boy up in front makes him kick up and  
then  
The boy way behind, he gets thrown off again;

And the Adams's pony, he looks just as though  
He's trying to laugh when the others laugh so;  
It looks like a laugh, but he can't make a noise  
Like the dog or the rest of the Adams's boys.

The Adams's children, they go out to play  
And sometimes their mother don't see them all day,  
But she never frets, 'cause the world is too small,  
So she said, for three boys to get lost in it all.  
And sometimes she listens outdoors and she hears  
The laughing and barking way over to Geer's,  
Which is most half a mile, and she smiles, because  
then  
She knows they'll be home when they're hungry  
again.

The Adams's children, they get on as though  
They were three great chums and not brothers, you  
know;  
And folks like to hear them, when they're going past,  
With the big one ahead and the little one last.  
They've always got playmates of their very own,  
And don't have to do chores or to study alone,  
And everything seems to be three times the fun  
For the Adams's children as though there's just one!





THE ADAMS'S BOYS



## BILLY PEEBLE'S CHRISTMAS

**B**ILLY PEEBLE, he ain't got no parents —  
never had none, 'cause  
When he's borned he was an orfunt; an' he  
said 'at Santa Claus  
Never didn't leave him nothin', 'cause he was a  
county charge,  
An' the overseer told him that his fambly was too  
large  
To remember orfunt children; so I ast Ma couldn't  
we  
Have Bill Peeble up to our house, so's to see our  
Christmas tree.  
An' she ast me if he's dirty; an' I said I guessed he  
was,  
But I didn't think it makes no difference with Santa  
Claus.

My his clo'es was awful ragged! Ma, she put him  
in a tub  
An' she poured it full of water, an' she gave him such  
a scrub  
'At he 'ist set there an' shivered; an' he told me  
afterwurds  
'At he never washed all over out to Overseer Bird's!  
'En she burned his ragged trousies an' she gave him  
some of mine;

My! she rubbed him an' she scrubbed him till she  
almost made him shine,  
Nen he 'ist looked all around him like he's scairt  
for quite a w'ile,  
An' even w'en Ma'd pat his head he wouldn't hardly  
smile.

'En after w'ile Ma took some flour-sacks an' 'en  
she laid  
'Em right down at the fireplace, 'ist 'cause she is  
afraid  
Santa Claus 'll soil the carpet when he comes down  
there, you know;  
An' Billy Peeble watched her, an' his eyes stuck out  
— 'ist so!  
'En Ma said 'at in the mornin' if we'd look down on  
the sacks  
'At they'd be 'ist full of soot where Santa Claus had  
made his tracks;  
Billy Peeble stood there, lookin'! An' he told me  
afterwurds  
He was scairt he'd wake right up an' be at Overseer  
Bird's.

Well, 'en she hung our stockin's up an' after w'ile  
she said:  
"Now, you an' Billy Peeble better go right off to  
bed,  
An' if you hear a noise tonight, don't you boys make  
a sound,

'Cause Santa Claus don't never come with little  
boys around!"

So me an' Billy went to bed, an' Billy Peeble, he  
Could hardly go to sleep at all — 'ist tossed an'  
tossed. You see

We had such w'ite sheets on the bed an' he said  
afterwurds

They never had no sheets at all at Overseer Bird's.

So we 'ist laid an' talked an' talked. An' Billy ast  
me who

Was Santa Claus. An' I said I don't know if it's  
all true,

But people say he's some old man who 'ist loves  
little boys

An' keeps a store at the north pole with heaps an'  
heaps of toys

W'ich he brings down in a big sleigh, with reindeers  
for his steeds,

An' comes right down the chimbly flue an' leaves  
'ist what you needs.

My! he's excited w'en I told him that! An' after-  
wurds

He said they never had no toys at Overseer Bird's.

I'm fallin' pretty near asleep w'en Billy Peeble said:  
"Sh-sh! What's that noise?" An' w'en he spoke I  
set right up in bed

Till sure enough I heard it in the parlor down below,  
An' Billy Peeble, he set up an' 'en he said: "Le's go!"

So we got up an' sneaked down stairs, an' both of us could see

'At it was surely Santa Claus, 'ist like Ma said he'd be;

But he must heard us comin' down, because he stopped an' said:

"You, Henry Blake an' William Peeble, go right back to bed!"

My goodness, we was awful scairt! An' both of us was pale,

An' Billy Peeble said up stairs: "My! Ain't he 'ist a whale!"

We didn't hardly dare to talk and got back into bed

An' Billy pulled the counterpane clear up above his head,

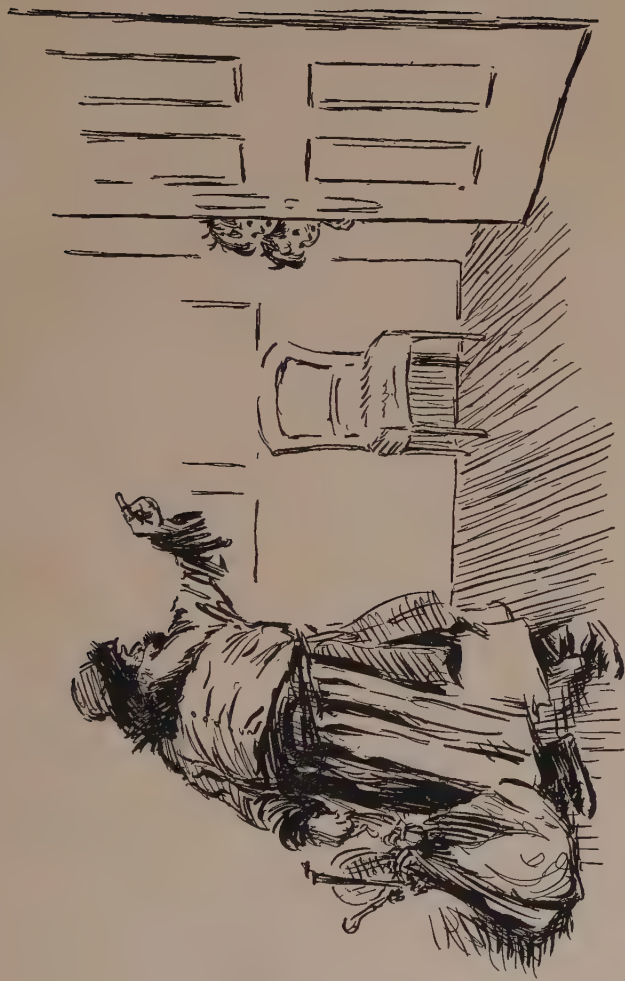
An' in the mornin' w'en we looked down on the flour-sacks,

W'y sure enough we saw the soot where he had made his tracks,

An' Billy got a suit of clothes, a drum, an' sled an' books,

Till he 'ist never said a word, but my! how glad he looks!

'En after w'ile it's dinner time an' Billy Peeble set Right next to Pa, an' my! how he 'ist et an' et an' et! Till he 'ist puffed 'an' had to leave his second piece of pie



BILLY PEEBLE'S CHRISTMAS





Because he couldn't eat no more. An' after dinner,  
w'y,  
Ma dressed him up in his new clo'es, an Billy Peeble  
said  
He's sorry he's an orfunt, an' Ma patted Billy's  
head,  
W'ich made him cry a little bit, an' he said after-  
wurds  
Nobody ever pats his head at Overseer Bird's.

An' all day long Pa looked at Ma an' Ma she looked  
at him,  
Because Pa said 'at Billy looked a little bit like  
Jim  
'At was my baby brother, but he died oncet, years  
ago,  
An' 'at's w'y Billy Peeble makes my mother like  
him so.  
She says 'at Santa brought him as a present, 'ist  
instead  
Of little Jim 'at died oncet. So she 'ist put him to  
bed  
On Christmas night an' tucked him in an' told me  
afterwurds  
'At he ain't never goin' back to Overseer Bird's.

## THE WAY HE USED TO DO

SOMETIMES when I come in at night  
And take my shoes off at the stair,  
I hear my Pop turn on the light  
And holler: "William, are you there?"  
And then he says: "You go to bed —  
I knew that stealthy step was you."  
And I asked how and then he said:  
"Cause that's the way I used to do."

Sometimes when I come home at six  
O'clock and hurry up my chores,  
And get a big armful of sticks  
Of wood and bring it all indoors,  
My Pop he comes and feels my head  
And says: "You've been in swimmin' — you!"  
When I asked how he knew, he said:  
"Cause that's the way I used to do."

Sometimes before a circus comes,  
When I'm as willing as can be  
To do my chores, and all my chums  
They all take turns at helping me,  
My Pop, he pats 'em on the head  
And says: "You like a circus, too?"  
When I asked how he knew, he said:  
"Cause that's the way I used to do."

And lots of times when he gets mad

Enough to whip me and declares

He never saw another lad

Like I am — well, at last he spares  
Me from a whipping and he lays

His rawhide down: "I can't whip you  
For that, although I should," he says,

"'Cause that's the way I used to do."

## A BOY'S VACATION TIME

**H**AIL, that long-awaited day  
When, the school books laid away,  
All the thoughts of merry youngsters turn  
from pages back to play!  
Done with lesson and with rule,  
Done with teacher and with school,  
Stray the vagrant hearts of childhood to the tempt-  
ing wood and pool!

Who will tell in rune and rhyme  
Of the glory and the grime  
In the dusty lanes and byways of a boy's vacation  
time?  
Hark, the whistle and the cry  
That is piping shrill and high  
From the chorus of glad youngsters trooping riot-  
ously by!

Say, did sun e'er brightly shine  
As when, with his rod and line  
Tramps the barefoot lad a-fishing, and the water  
clear and fine?  
Sweet the murmur of the trees,  
And what glory now he sees  
In the chatter of the wild birds and the buzz of bum-  
ble-bees!

Hear the green woods cry and call,  
Through the Summer to the Fall,  
“We are waiting, waiting, waiting, with a welcome  
for you all!”

Hear the lads take up the cry,  
With an echo, shrill and high:  
“We are coming, coming, coming, for vacation time  
is nigh!”

How the skies are blue and fair,  
How the clover scents the air  
With a witchery of fragrance that is delicate and rare!  
How the blossoms bud and blow,  
And the great waves flood and flow  
In the ocean of boy happiness, like billows, to and  
fro!

Ah, my heart goes back and sighs  
When the piping calls and cries  
From the hearts of merry youngsters like a song of  
triumph rise!  
And I would that rune and rhyme  
Might be splendid and sublime  
In my heart to tell the story of a boy's vacation time!

## A BOY'S CHOICE

I 'D ruther take a w'ippin' 'an a scoldin' any day,  
'Cuz a w'ippin' makes you tingle, but you go  
right out an' play,

An' after w'ile you're over it an' 'en at dinner, w'y,  
Your mother's awful sorry an' she brings a piece of  
pie

An' says she hates to do it, 'cuz it hurts her 'ist as  
bad

As it does anybody w'en she w'ips her little lad.

An' 'en at night she kisses you an' puts you into  
bed

An' tucks the covers in an' says you're Mamma's  
Turly-head,

An' my! she's 'ist so lovely! An' she sits beside of  
you

'Ist 'cuz she feels so sorry over w'at she had to do.

An' 'en she leaves the candle burn an' says for you  
to call

If you want anything from her, an' you ain't scairt  
at all!

But w'en you get a scoldin' she don't never bring  
you pie,

Becuz you'll surely break her heart; an' 'en she  
starts to cry;



An' my! you feel so sorry, an' you wisht she wouldn't,  
'cuz

It shows you how you've grieved her an' how turble  
bad you wuz.

An' all day long she never smiles; an' w'en you go  
to bed

She never leaves the candle burn or calls you Turly-  
head.

An' sometimes you see big, w'ite things a-lookin' at  
your bed,

'At makes you scairt an' pull the covers up above  
your head,

An' 'en you s'pose how would you feel if Mamma  
wuz to die,

An' biumpy you feel so bad 'at you 'ist start to cry.  
So w'en she looks at you so hurt an' talks to you 'at  
way —

I'd ruther take a w'ippin' 'an a scoldin' any day!

## A DISCOURAGED KINDERGARTNER

**I**S mornin' mamma told me  
'At I mus' be awful dood,  
'Tuz I'm startin' on my schooldays  
An' I promised her I would.  
But I'm awful much 'iscouraged  
'Tuz I tried so hard to det  
All the lessons teacher gave me,  
But I tant read yet!

My! it's awful long till dinner,  
An' I couldn't hardly wait  
W'en I dot done wif my letters  
An' I wrote 'em on my slate,  
An' I'm 'shamed to tell my mamma  
'At I dess she'll have to let  
Me go back again tomorrow,  
'Tuz I tant read yet.

She'll be awful disappointed,  
'Tuz I've been there half a day,  
An' she'll think I didn't study  
Or it wouldn't be that way.  
But I don't s'pose I tan help it,  
An' it does no dood to fret,  
'Tuz I've been to school all mornin'  
An' I tant read yet.

I dess our teacher's stupid,  
    'Tuz she didn't seem to care  
W'en I went right up an' told her  
    W'ere she's sittin' in her chair,  
'At I'm awful much 'iscouraged  
    An' my Mamma she would fret  
'Tuz I've been to school all mornin'  
    An' I tant read yet.

An' 'en she started laughin',  
    It's as true as I'm alive,  
An' ast how old I am, an' 'en  
    I told her half past five,  
An' 'en she tame an' tised me,  
    'Tuz my eyes are dettin' wet,  
An' told me not to worry  
    'Tuz I tant read yet.

I dess if she had Mother Goose  
    She'd be 'isturbed herself,  
If she 'ud go an' det it  
    Down f'm off th' lib'ry shelf,  
An' 'en w'en it is open,  
    I dess she's apt to fret  
If she's been to school all mornin'  
    An' she tant read yet!

## THE DELUSION OF GHOSTS

SOMETIMES when I got to do errands at night  
An' th' moon is all dark an' th' ain't any light,  
An' th' wind, when it blows, makes a shivery  
sound,

An' everything seems awful still all around;  
Sometimes when a hoot-owl goes "Woo-oo-oo-oo!"  
My legs feel so funny; I'm all goose-flesh, too.  
An' maybe I'm startled when I hear it call,  
But I ain't a bit scairt; I'm thes' nervous, that's all.

Oncet me an' Joe Simpson wuz walkin' one night  
A' past th' old graveyard, an' saw somethin' white  
'Et looked like a ghost, standin' right in th' road,  
An' my, Joe wuz scairt! 'Cuz he said 'et he knowed  
It wuz surely a ghost; an' I wisseled, becuz  
When you wissel you scare 'em; an' all that it wuz  
Wuz a great, big, white cow; an' it thes' walked away,  
An' I wuzn't no more scairt 'n if it wuz day!

'Cuz I don't b'lieve in ghosts, an' I'd thes' as lieve go  
A' past any graveyard an' walk awful slow,  
An' wissel, an' sit on th' top of th' fence,  
'Cuz th' ain't any ghosts if you got any sense.  
An' when we saw that big white thing by th' road  
'Et Joe wuz so scairt of, I wuzn't. I knowed  
All th' time it's no ghost. I wuz nervous becuz  
I knowed what it wuzn't, but not what it wuz!

## A STORY OF SELF-SACRIFICE

POP took me to the circus 'cause it disappoints  
me so

To have to stay at home, although he doesn't  
care to go;

He's seen it all so many times, the wagons and the  
tents;

The cages of wild animals and herds of elephants;

This morning he went down with me to watch the  
big parade,

He was so dreadful busy that he oughtn't to have  
stayed,

He said he'd seen it all before and all the reason he  
Went down and watched it coming was because it's  
new to me.

Then we walked to the circus grounds and Pop he  
says: "I guess

You want a glass of lemonade, of course," and I says:  
"Yes."

And he bought one for each of us, and when he drank  
his he

Told me he drank it only just to keep me company;

And then he says, "The sideshow is, I s'pose, the  
same old sell,

But everybody's goin' in, so we might just as well."

He said he'd seen it all before, and all the reason he  
Went in and saw it was because it was all new to me.

26      A STORY OF SELF-SACRIFICE

Well, by and by we both came out and went in the  
big tent,  
And saw the lions and tigers and the bigges' elephant  
With chains on his front corner and an awful funny  
nose  
That looks around for peanuts that the crowd of  
people throws;  
And Pop, he bought some peanuts and it curled its  
nose around  
Until it found most every one that he threw on the  
ground;  
He said he'd seen it all before, and all the reason he  
Stayed there and threw 'em was because it was all  
new to me.

Well, then the band began to play the liveliestest  
tune,  
And Pop, he says he guessed the show would open  
pretty soon;  
So we went in the other tent, and Pop, he says to  
me:  
"I guess we'll get some reserved seats so you will  
surely see."  
And then some lovely ladies came and stood there  
on the ground,  
And jumped up on the horses while the horses ran  
around;  
Pop said he'd seen it all before, and all the reason he  
Looked at the ladies was because it was all new  
to me.

Well, finally it's over, but a man came out to say  
That they're going to have a concert, and Pop said  
we'd better stay;  
He said they're always just the same and always  
such a sell,  
But lots of folks was staying and he guessed we might  
as well.  
Then by and by we're home again, and Mamma  
wants to know  
What kind of circus was it, and Pop said, "The same  
old show,"  
And said he'd seen it all before and all the reason he  
Had stayed and seen it all was 'cause it's all so new  
to me.

## THE LOST CHILD

I 'MEMBER when they cut my curls not very  
long ago,  
Because they looked just like a girl's, and I'm  
a boy, you know;  
I used to wear 'em awful long, and once my Pa, he  
said,  
It's time I had my curls cut off and wore short hair  
instead;  
Because I'm big enough for that; and then they  
took the shears  
And snipped my curls off one by one right close up  
to my ears,  
But every time a curl came off, my Mother, she just  
hid  
Her face a little bit and cried. I wonder why she did!

And after while she picked one up and held it in  
her hand  
With something shining in her eyes I didn't under-  
stand;  
She petted it as if it was a little boy or girl,  
And acted fond of it when it was nothing but a curl.  
And after while they're all cut off and down there  
on the floor,  
And I looked much more like a boy than I had been  
before,



But there was something in her eyes she tried and  
tried and tried  
To brush away, but still it came. I wonder why  
she cried.

And after while I'm all trimmed off, and then my  
Pa, he said,  
I'm not a baby any more, but I'm a boy instead,  
And he is awful proud of me, and then my Ma, she  
smiled  
And said we found a boy that day and lost a little  
child;  
So I said I would hunt for him and bring him back  
but then  
She said she was afraid that he would not come back  
again;  
And picked the curls I had all up from off the floor  
and hid  
Them in her bureau drawer and cried. I wonder  
why she did.

## DOUGHNUTTING TIME

**W**UNST w'en our girl wuz makin' pies an'  
doughnuts — 'ist a lot —

We stood around with great, big eyes,  
'cuz we boys like 'em hot;

An' w'en she dropped 'em in the lard they sizzled  
'ist like fun.

An' w'en she takes 'em out it's hard to keep from  
takin' one.

An' 'en she says: "You boys'll get all spattered up  
with grease,

An' biumpy she says she'll let us have 'ist one apiece;  
So I took one for me an' one for little James McBride,  
The widow's only orfunt son 'at's waitin' there out-  
side.

An' Henry, he took one 'ist for himself an' Nellie  
Flynn,

'At's waitin' at the kitchen door an' dassent to come  
in

Becuz her mother told her not, an' Johnny, he took  
two,

'Cuz Amy Brennan likes 'em hot, 'ist like we chin-  
nern do.

'En Henry happened 'ist to think he didn't get a one

For little Ebenezer Brink, the carpet beater's son,  
Who never gets 'em home becuz he says he ain't  
quite sure  
But thinks perhaps the reason wuz his folkses are  
too poor.

An' 'en I give my own away to little Willie Beggs  
'At fell way down his stairs one day an' give him  
crooked legs,  
'Cuz Willie always seems to know w'en our girl's  
goin' to bake,  
He wouldn't ast for none —oh, no! But, my! he's  
fond of cake.

So I went back an' 'en I got another one for me  
Right out the kettle, smokin' hot an' brown as it  
could be,  
An' John, he got one, too, becuz he give his own  
to Clare,  
An' w'en our girl, she looked, there wuz 'ist two  
small doughnuts there!

My! She wuz angry w'en she looked an' saw 'ist  
them two there,  
An' says she knew 'at she had cooked a crock full  
an' to spare,  
She says it's awful 'scouragin' to bake an' fret an'  
fuss,  
An' w'en she thinks she's got 'em in the crock they're  
all in us!

## A MODERN MIRACLE

ONCE w'en I'm sick th' doctor come  
An' 'en I put my tongue 'way out,  
An' he says, "H-m-m! Nurse, get me some  
Warm water, please." An' in about  
A minute, w'y, she did an' 'en  
He put a glass thing into it  
An' 'en he wiped it off again  
An' put it in my mouth a bit.

'En after w'ile he took it out  
An' held it up w'ere he could see,  
An' 'en he says, "H-m-m! 'Ist about  
Too high a half of a degree."  
An' 'en Ma asked him if I'm bad  
An' he says "Nope!" 'Ist gruff an' cross  
'An says "W'y you can't kill a lad,  
An' if you do it ain't much loss!"

An' 'en she's mad an' he 'ist bust  
Out laughin' an' he says, "Don't fret,  
He's goin' t' be all right, I trust.  
W'y he ain't even half dead yet."  
An' 'en he felt my pulse, 'at way,  
An' patted me upon my head  
An' says "There ain't no school today,  
'Cuz one of th' trustees is dead!"



A MODERN MIRACLE



An' my, I'm awful sorry w'en

He told me that. An' 'en he said  
"He'll be all right by noon." An' 'en

He went away. An' Ma says "Ned,  
How do you feel?" An' 'en, you know,

Since Doctor told me that, somehow,  
I'm awful sick a while ago,

But, my! I'm almost well right now!

## NERVOUSTOWN

**O**H, there's never a noise in Nervoustown;  
Not the cry of a youngster; and up or down  
There's never a cheer or a whistle shrill;  
Just silence, like that of the grave, so still;  
The horses trot with a muffled tread,  
But the place seems lonesome and drear and dead,  
For a cloth-bound head and a nervous frown  
Are all you may see in Nervoustown.

Sh-h! you must walk with noiseless tread  
For there's many a hot and aching head;  
The doors are closed and the blinds are down,  
For it must be dark in Nervoustown.  
And you mustn't whistle or shout or cheer  
Or slam the doors! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!  
Lest a cloth-bound head and a terrible frown  
Poke out at you from Nervoustown.

Oh, there's never a person there but goes  
On the very tip of his tippy-toes;  
Nor ever a lad has heard at all  
Of follow-my-leader or rude baseball;  
It's much as your life is worth to yell,  
The flowers can't grow for the camphor-smell;  
While a big policeman, up and down,  
Cries "Sh-h!" through the streets of Nervoustown.



And a little boy, who didn't know,  
Once years and years and years ago,  
Gave three loud, lusty cheers one day  
For something or other, I can't say,  
And they snipped his head off — Oh! Oh! Oh!  
With big, red, rusty shears, you know,  
And cloth-bound heads bobbed up and down  
With gladness all through Nervoustown.

But, oh, it's gloomy in Nervoustown,  
With the doors tight shut and the blinds all down,  
Where the frightened lad his whole life goes  
On the very tips of his tippy-toes,  
Where the hens don't cluck and the birds don't sing,  
And even the church bells dare not ring  
Lest a cloth-bound head with a terrible frown  
Poke out at them from Nervoustown.

## SONG OF SUMMER DAYS

**S**ING a song of hollow logs,  
Chirp of cricket, croak of frogs,  
Cry of wild bird, hum of bees,  
Dancing leaves and whisp'ring trees;  
Legs all bare and dusty toes,  
Ruddy cheeks and freckled nose,  
Splash of brook and swish of line,  
Where the song that's half so fine?

Sing a song of summer days,  
Leafy nooks and shady ways,  
Nodding roses, apples red,  
Clover like a carpet spread;  
Sing a song of running brooks,  
Cans of bait and fishing hooks,  
Dewy hollows, yellow moons,  
Birds a-pipe with merry tunes.

Sing a song of skies of blue,  
Eden's garden made anew,  
Scarlet hedges, leafy lanes,  
Vine-embowered sills and panes;  
Stretch of meadows, splashed with dew,  
Silver clouds with sunlight through,  
Cry of loon and pipe of wren,  
Sing and call it home again.

## WHAT MOTHER DOESN'T KNOW

SOMETIMES w'en I got to pile wood in the  
yard,  
'Ist wringin' with sweat 'cuz I'm workin' so  
hard,

An' see all the neighbors' boys startin' to fish,  
I can't hardly work any more, an' I wish  
'At I wuz a-goin' an' 'en right away  
I run an' ast Ma if I can't go today,  
An' she says to me 'en: "Johnny Jones, you can run  
Off an' fish 'ist as soon as your work is all done.

You must work while you work,  
You must play while you play  
An' 'en you'll be happy for many a day."  
An' mebbe it's so,  
But my goodness! to go  
With the boys 'at's gone fishin'!—I guess she  
dunno!

Sometimes w'en I got to hoe garden an' hear  
The boys playin' ball in the next lot, so near  
I hear 'em all cheerin' an' see 'em all score,  
I can't hardly stand it to hoe any more.  
So 'en I ast Ma if I can't go an' play  
An' promise to hoe twict as much the next day,  
But she says to me 'en: "Johnny Jones, you can run  
Off an' play 'ist as soon as your work is all done.

You must work while you work,  
 You must play while you play  
 An' 'en you'll be happy for many a day."  
 An' mebbe it's so,  
 But, my goodness! to hoe  
 W'en you hear 'em a-playin'!—I guess she dunno.

Sometimes w'en the snow gets all piled up so deep  
 On the walk 'at she tells me to go out an' sweep  
 It all off, an' Sam Russell comes by with his sled,  
 My broom 'at I'm usin' gets heavy as lead.  
 An' I can't hardly sweep, an' I ast Ma if I  
 Can't go out a-slidin' an' sweep by an' by,  
 But she says to me 'en: "Johnny Jones, you can run  
 Off and slide 'ist as soon as your work is all done.

You must work while you work,  
 You must play while you play  
 An' 'en you'll be happy for many a day."  
 An' mebbe it's so,  
 But to have to sweep snow  
 W'en the boys are a-slidin'!—I guess she dunno.

## SO LONESOME NOW

OVER t' Henry Murray's, why,  
They always had lots an' lots o' pie,  
An' toy automobiles an' v'locipedes  
An' walkin' toys, like a fellow reads  
About sometimes, but he seldom sees,  
An' swings out under th' big oak trees,  
An' childurn a-playin' on every bough —  
But my! It is turrible lonesome now.

Over t' Henry Murray's, why,  
His mother an' father 'ist seemed t' try  
An' see if they couldn't get some new toys  
For Henry an' all of us other boys  
'At played with him; an' she used t' make  
Th' dandiest currant an' raisin cake,  
An' boys 'ist flocked there like flies, somehow —  
But my! It is turrible lonesome now.

Over 't Henry Murray's, why,  
His mother 'ud see you goin' by  
An' ast you why you didn't come an' play  
With Henry an' all of his toys, some day.  
An' every Christmas she'd have a tree  
With presents, th' finest you ever see,  
An' nobody got forgot, somehow —  
But my! It is turrible lonesome now.

An' over t' Henry Murray's, why,  
We boys 'ist look while we're goin' by,  
An' see all his toys layin' there outside.  
Once Big Bill Skinner broke down an' cried  
An' says he don't care — it was 'ist too bad,  
'Cause Henry was all of th' boy they had.  
An' th' swings 'ist hang from th' big oak bough —  
An' my! It is turrible lonesome now.

## A LITTLE LOVE STORY

**S**HE understands. I do not need to go  
And tell her she is all the world to me.  
I never speak a word to let her know  
I will be faithful till Eternity,  
But when, upon the way to school, she sees  
Me come with two red apples in my hands  
And hears me say: "Please, Sally Jane, take these,"  
It is no wonder that she understands.

Or when she sees me at the old front gate  
With my new sled right after the first snow,  
And from her window calls to me to wait  
Until she asks her Mother can she go,  
I do not need to tell her why I come  
In my fur cap with mittens on my hands,  
For even if my feelings make me dumb  
She looks at me and then she understands.

Or if she whispers something when in school,  
As children are quite often apt to do,  
Forgetting all about the teacher's rule,  
And teacher says to Sally: "Was that you?"  
Why then I see how scared she is and rise  
Up in my seat and hold up both my hands  
And take the blame — she looks into my eyes —  
I do not need to speak — she understands.

Or if she has the measles so I dare  
Not go up to her house, but I can look  
In through the window and she sees me there,  
And if I bring a dandy story book  
And leave it on the fence post where the nurse  
Can come and take it in, and if my hands  
Have written, "Dear, I hope you'll be no worse,"  
I do not need to speak — she understands.

I do not need to tell her how I feel —  
She only has to watch the things I do;  
She knows my heart is true to her as steel,  
And if it rains or if the sky is blue  
I wait for her to walk to school with me,  
And carry all her school-books in my hands,  
And I am just as happy as can be,  
And so is she — because she understands.





A LITTLE LOVE STORY



## ON A NOISELESS FOURTH

**O**N a noiseless street stood a crackerless lad  
with a screechless fife and a headless drum,  
Venting his glee in a voiceless shout, as a  
blareless band, all still and dumb,  
Came down the length of the avenue, and a bugle  
corps blew a noteless blare,  
While a screechless rocket with noiseless hiss cut a  
fireless path through the silent air.  
The blareless band played a soundless tune and the  
crackerless lad gave a voiceless shout  
As the rippling folds of the unfurled flag from the  
upheld standard fluttered out.  
“Hurrah!” he cried with a voiceless cry, put forth  
from his lips in a speechless way.  
“Hurrah for the guns of Lexington and the noiseless  
Independence Day!”

Then far away down the village street a smokeless  
gun belched a soundless roar,  
A popless cracker fizzless died, and the band played  
a blareless tune once more;  
The clickless guns of the village guards with a thud-  
less sound dropped on the ground.  
The marshal left his neighless horse, and the voice-  
less mob ranged all around;

A fizzless pinwheel silent whirred, and the drum corps  
    joined in a tootless screech,  
The lips of the village speaker moved in the tongue-  
    less strains of a wordless speech.  
Then a graceless benediction fell, and the crackerless  
    lad, in a voiceless way,  
Gave a soundless shout for Bunker Hill and the noise-  
    less Independence Day.

Oh, the pulseless thrill of the noiseless guns and the  
    tootless fifes and the headless drums,  
The heartless joy of the crackerless lad, as the sound-  
    less pageant noiseless comes  
Down the village street, and the sightless glow of the  
    hissless rocket's fireless glare  
With noiseless swish from the silent earth through the  
    measureless breadth of the lightless air!  
But a fingerless youth of the olden time, when crack-  
    ers popped and cannons roared,  
Looked on the scene with much disgust and the look  
    of a lad who is greatly bored;  
And he cried aloud — 'twas the only sound that was  
    heard, not made in a voiceless way:  
"Dog-gone the guns at Bunker Hill and the noiseless  
    Independence Day!"

## CONSCIOUS IGNORANCE

I 'M only 'ist a little girl,  
    An' w'en I want to play  
    An' Mamma says don't go outside  
    Our yard this livelong day,  
An' w'en some other girls 'ey come  
    An' pester me to go,  
It may be wrong, but I'm so young,  
    How does she s'pose I know?

An' 'en w'en she goes out sometimes  
    An' says: "Now go to bed  
At eight o'clock this very night,"  
    I 'member what she said.  
But w'en the mantel clock strikes eight  
    An' I don't want to go,  
It may be wrong, but I'm so young,  
    How does she s'pose I know?

An' w'en she says: "Now, don't go near  
    The cookie jar this day,"  
I want some cookies awful much  
    An' try to stay away.  
But all the time I'm hungry for  
    Some cookies, an' I go —  
It may be wrong, but I'm so young,  
    How does she s'pose I know?

I'm only 'ist a little girl  
Not more 'n six years old,  
An' my, I always try to do  
E'zactly as I'm told.  
But w'en I make 'ist one mistake,  
My Ma ought not to go  
An' punish me, 'cause I'm so young,  
How does she s'pose I know?

## THE PLAYTIME OF BACHELOR BILL

O UR Uncle Bill's a bachelur, an' it's an awful  
shame,  
'Cuz he knows stories about bears an' knows  
'em all by name.

An' growls 'ist like a really one an' makes you think  
a bear

Is underneath th' table, but of course it isn't there.

An' when he takes you on his knee he talks 'ist like  
a book

An' after w'ile your eyes get big an' you're a-scairt to  
look

W'en he says: "Nen a bear come out an' 'ist went  
Boo-oo-oo!"

Becuz you almost think a bear is really after you.

An' 'en he plays wild Indian an' hides himself some-  
wheres

W'ile we look in th' corners an' behind th' parlor  
chairs,

An' peek in th' dark closets an' p'tend we're on a  
scout

Till after w'ile he makes a whoop an' 'en comes  
rushin' out

'Ist like he's on th' warpath; an' us chinnern run  
upstairs

An' hide in Mamma's closet an' he makes us think  
'at bears

## 48 THE PLAYTIME OF BACHELOR BILL

Are comin' in to get us an' he growls 'ist like he's one,  
An' my! we're turble scairt an' yet it's awful lots o'  
fun.

An' 'en he is a pirate an' he makes us chinnern play  
'At we are in a shipwreck an' th' crew is cast away  
Upon a desert island w'ere his treasure chest is hid,  
An' we are only sailors an' his name is Captain Kidd.  
An' w'en we hear him comin' he 'ist roars an' 'en we  
run,

'Cuz he has broomsticks for a sword an' pokers for a  
gun,  
An' after w'ile he kills us all but it don't hurt, an'  
w'en

He sails away in his big ship we come to life again.

'En after w'ile our Mother comes an' taps him on th'  
head,

An' says it's time for bears an' scouts an' things  
to be in bed,

An' leads us chinnern all upstairs an' maybe if we  
keep

Right still she'll let th' candle burn until we go to  
sleep.

'En after w'ile our Uncle Bill comes up to say good-  
night,

An' see how snug an' warm we are an' all tucked in  
so tight,

An' 'en he kisses us good-night an' 'en his eyes 'ist  
blur:

I guess we make him sorry 'at he is a bachelor!



## HOW HENRY BLAKE KNOWS

**D**ON'T you dast kill a toad, Henry Blake says,  
for true  
As your're born it'll rain right away if you  
do.

For Henry Blake says oncet some boys 'at he knowed  
Were goin' a-fishin' an' one killed a toad,  
An' it all clouded up an' it got just as black,  
An' it thundered an' lightnined before they got back  
Till they were awful scairt. He says he dunno why,  
But he thinks toads has somethin' t' do with the sky.  
An' Henry Blake showed  
Us th' place in th' road  
Where the boys went an' kilt him an' that's how  
he knowed.

Henry Blake says if you just split a bean  
An' put half of it on a wart when it's green,  
An' throw half of it between midnight an' dawn  
In a cistern somewhere, why, your wart'll be gone  
Just as soon as it rots. Henry Blake says it's true  
'Cuz a friend of his showed him a bean cut in two  
That took off a big wart, an' th' half was all black  
An' Henry Blake says that it never came back.  
An' Henry's friend showed  
Him th' cistern he throwed  
The other half into an' that's how he knowed!

## THE LAND OF BLOW BUBBLES

**H**IS curls are like rings of red gold on his head,  
His lips are as red as a cherry,  
His cheeks are as round as an apple, and red,  
His eyes full of mischief and merry.  
His heart is as pure as a snowflake in air,  
A fig for the whole of his troubles!  
For he's my Boy Careless — you've seen him some-  
where,  
And he lives in the land of Blow Bubbles!

Now he's riding a stick that is legless and dead,  
Through the lanes and across the sere stubbles,  
For a stick is a horse with four legs and a head  
In that magic boy land of Blow Bubbles!  
He bears at his side a sword cut from a lath,  
With a big wooden gun on his shoulder,  
And woe to the wild beast that crosses his path  
For never a huntsman was bolder.

Now down from his steed leaps Boy Careless in haste,  
He drops on one knee in the stubbles,  
For stubbles are woods full of wild beasts, all chased  
To their death by the boys in Blow Bubbles!  
His musket he brings to his shoulder and shoots,  
The sound of it echoes and doubles,  
For a make-believe gun kills the make-believe brutes  
In that magic boy land of Blow Bubbles.

Then out from the forest a savage all red  
 With blood-curdling yell leaps to battle,  
 A thrust from the big wooden sword — he is dead  
 With a most melancholy death-rattle.  
 Then up from the ground lifts Boy Careless his horse,  
 And back o'er the all-trackless stubbles,  
 For it's many a mile to his cabin, of course,  
 In the magic boy land of Blow Bubbles.

Oh, joy to the lad in his make-believe ride  
 With the make-believe gun on his shoulder,  
 With the make-believe sword cut from lath at his side,  
 And a sigh from the heart that is older!  
 A whistle for Care from the harp of his lips,  
 A fig for the whole of his troubles,  
 When he's off like the wind on his make-believe trips  
 In the magic boy land of Blow Bubbles!

## THE GINGERCake MAN

**T**HE Gingercake man was a lump of brown  
dough

Till a great rolling pin was run over him, so!  
To flatten him out, and he lay there so thin,  
His bones almost popped through the holes in his  
skin;

They sifted him over with flour and spice,  
And made him some eyes with two kernels of rice,  
And took some dried currants, the biggest and best,  
To make him some buttons for closing his vest.

The Gingercake man wobbled this way and that,  
When they seeded a raisin and made him a hat  
That was stuck on his head in the jauntiest way,  
For a Gingercake man is not made every day.  
They stuck in some cloves for his ears; yes, indeed!  
And made him some teeth out of caraway seed,  
And when he was finished they buttered a pan —  
The biggest they had — for the Gingercake man.

Then into the oven they put him to bake  
Until he was hard and could stand and not break  
His legs when he stood; and they set him to cool  
Until all the children should come home from school.  
And oh, the delight and the wonder and glee,  
When mother invited the children to see,



THE GINGERCAKE MAN



All sifted with sugar and out of the pan,  
The good-natured face of the Gingercake man.

But alas and alas! 'Tis a short life and sweet  
Is the Gingercake man's — for they ate off his feet,  
They broke off his arms with the hungriest zest,  
And picked all the buttons from out of his vest;  
They nibbled his legs off and ate up his hat,  
And everything edible went just like that,  
Till the cloves and the kernels of rice you may scan  
As all that is left of the Gingercake man!

## LONESOME

SAY, little boy, be friends with me and I'll be  
friends with you;  
And I won't never tell on you, no matter what  
you do.

It's awful lonesome over here and, goodness, but  
it's hard

To have your mother say that you must play in  
your back yard.

There's lots of daisies where I am, and butterflies as  
bright

As anything you ever saw, and I just saw one light;  
Perhaps you'd catch it in your cap if I would help  
you to —

Come over and be friends with me and I'll be  
friends with you.

I'm all the children we have got — I'm lonesome as  
can be,

I wish you wouldn't be afraid to come and play with  
me.

I don't care if your face ain't clean or if your clothes  
are torn,

I didn't have no clothes at all the time that I was  
born.

We got ripe apples on our trees and I will boost you so  
That you can get some if you come, and when it's  
time to go



We'll fill your cap and pockets full to take home.  
Don't you see  
I'm willing to be friends with you if you'll be  
friends with me?

I've got a lot of wooden toys, as fine as they can  
be,  
But I want something that's alive to run around with  
me,  
And play wild Indians and bears, and if you'll  
come and play  
Perhaps my Mamma 'll let me come and play with  
you some day.  
We've got some dandy hollow trees, the finest any-  
wheres,  
And one of us can hide in them when we are playing  
bears,  
And growl just like he's awful cross, and all the  
time you know  
It's only make-believe, of course, but then it scares  
you so.

I wish you'd come and play with me. I've got a  
jumping-jack  
I'll give you for your very own to keep when you go  
back,  
And you can ride my v'locipede most all the after-  
noon  
And blow some bubbles with my pipe and play  
with my balloon.

I've got an awful lot of toys and I will let you play  
That they are yours as much as mine for all the time  
you stay,

I'm all the boys my folks have got. I'm lonesome  
as can be,

Come on, and I'll be friends with you if you'll be  
friends with me.

## THE GARDEN OF PLAY

**O**UT in the Garden of Childhood gay  
Romp three glad youngsters with merry  
cries,

Startling the birds with their boisterous play,  
Lightheart and Laughter and big Brighteyes.  
Ever you see them and hear them there,  
Morning or evening or blossomy noon,  
And oh, but the Garden of Youth is fair,  
And oh, but the years of it pass too soon!

Over the Garden arch cloudless skies,  
(Ah, but the skies of all Youth are blue!)  
Lightheart and Laughter and big Brighteyes  
Find in each nook something rare and new.  
Cool is the shade of the coaxing trees,  
Bidding them hide from the sun at noon,  
And oh, but what glorious days are these,  
And oh, but the hours of them pass too soon!

Rare is the Garden with fragrant flowers  
(Ah, but the flowers of Youth are fair!)  
Garlands they weave of the golden hours,  
Sweet with the song of the birds in air.  
Splashed all the earth with a rosy light,  
Light of the sun at its splendid noon,  
And oh, but the sunshine of Youth is bright,  
And oh, but the light of it dies too soon!

Sweet to mine ears from the Garden gay  
Echo their calls and their merry cries,  
Startling the birds with their boisterous play,  
Lightheart and Laughter and big Brighteyes.  
Dips the red sun to its shadowed west,  
These are the years of mine afternoon,  
And oh, but the years of my youth were best,  
And oh, but the joy of them passed too soon!

## WE AIN'T SCARED O' PA

US boys ain't scared o' Pa so much,  
He only makes a noise,  
An' says he never did see such  
Onmanageable boys.  
But when Ma looks around I see  
Just somethin' long an' flat  
An' always make a point to be  
Some better after that.

Pa promises an' promises,  
But never does a thing;  
But what Ma says she does she does,  
An' when I go to bring  
Her slipper or her hair brush when  
She says she'll dust my pants,  
I think I could be better then  
If I had one more chance.

Pa always says nex' time 'at he  
Will have a word to say,  
But Ma she is more apt to be  
A-doin' right away;  
Pa turns around at us an' glares  
As fierce as he can look,  
But when we're out o' sight, upstairs,  
He goes back to his book.

Ma doesn't glare as much as Pa  
Or make as big a fuss,  
But what she says is law is law,  
And when she speaks to us  
She's lookin' carelessly around  
F'r somethin' long an' flat,  
And when we notice it, we're bound  
To be good after that.

So we ain't scairt o' Pa at all,  
Although he thinks we are;  
But when we hear Ma come an' call,  
No difference how far  
We are away we answer quick,  
An' tell her where we're at,  
When she stoops down and starts to pick  
Up somethin' long an' flat!

## A PEARL OF PRICE

**S**HE isn't worth a fortune and she hasn't any  
stocks,  
Her wealth is all in little shoes and pinafores  
and frocks.

In little rings of curling hair and big blue, laughing  
eyes,

In leaves and grass and buds and flowers and bees  
and butterflies.

But when she comes in tired from play and crawls  
upon my knee

She's worth a hundred millions to her mother and to  
me.

She sits among her dolls and toys and doesn't seem  
to care

If wealth is all in rosy cheeks and locks of curly hair.

She toddles up to me and like an artful fairy clips

A coupon bearing love from off the sweetness of her  
lips.

And when she puts her arms around my neck and  
goos in glee,

She's worth uncounted millions to her mother and to  
me.

And when she's in her crib at night and daintily  
tucked in,

The wealth of Croesus couldn't buy the dimple in her  
chin,  
And as she blinks her roguish eyes to play at peek-  
a-boo,  
She chuckles me a fortune with each archly spoken  
goo.  
And though she has no fortune, I am sure you will  
agree,  
She's a fortune, more than money, to her mother and  
to me.



## DEAR LITTLE, QUEER LITTLE MAN

**D**EAR little, queer little man,  
With his hair all a tumble of curls,  
With a light in his eyes  
Like the blue of the skies  
When the dawn's rosy banner unfurls!  
Sweet little, fleet little man,  
Who fills all the house with his toys,  
Whose laugh has the truth  
Of the heart of his youth:  
A toast to the health of our boys!

Dear little, queer little man,  
With a big, paper cap on his head,  
And a sword at his side  
As he gets up to ride  
On his hobby-horse, gaudy and red!  
Play, little, gay little man;  
Fill all of the house with your noise,  
For, oh, it were ill  
If your laughter were still!  
A toast to the laughter of boys!

Dear little, queer little man,  
With dreams of the future to be,  
When he shall grow tall  
And shall care for us all,

64 DEAR LITTLE, QUEER LITTLE MAN

His mother, his sister and me!  
Brave little, grave little man,  
With thoughts, like his youth, incomplete,  
But bearing the seed  
That shall blossom and lead  
To manhood all gracious and sweet.

Dear little, queer little man,  
Whose heart is so boyish and pure,  
May the sweetness and truth  
That are flowers of youth  
Through all of your being endure!  
Play, little, gay little man;  
Fill all of the house with your noise,  
For, oh, what so sweet  
As the pattering feet  
And the echoing laughter of boys?

Dear little, queer little man,  
The light of the dawn's rosy beams  
Be evermore spread  
On your dear, curly head,  
And truth to your innocent dreams!  
Blest little, best little man,  
God keep you as pure as the truth  
That lingers and lies  
In the light of your eyes:  
Long life to the heart of your youth!

## GIRL OF MINE

O H, her frock is crisp and white,  
And her hair is curled up tight  
To her roguish little head, just  
like an aureole of light.

Not a heart but she could win  
With the ribbon at her chin  
And her cheeks that have such  
very little merry dimples in.

Ah, the laughter in her eyes,  
And the wonder and surprise  
As she toddles through the waving  
grass in search of butterflies;  
And the flowers nod and sway  
In their love of her and say  
By their homage as she passes she's  
a fairer flower than they.

Ah, the sweetness and the grace  
In her radiant little face  
As she scampers through the sunlight  
in her airy, fairy race;  
How the roguish laughter trips  
From the gateway of her lips  
Like the lilting of the robin  
through the leafy bough that slips.

And the birds in branches high  
Seem to join her merry cry,  
And to chirp a fearless greeting as  
    she gaily toddles by;  
And so light her footsteps fall  
That the clover blossoms call:  
“See! She stepped on us in passing  
    but we’re scarcely bruised at all!”

## CHUMS

**H**E lives acrost the street from us  
An' ain't as big as me;  
His mother takes in washin' 'cuz  
They're poor as they can be;  
But every night he brings his slate  
An' 'en I do his sums,  
An' help him get his lessons straight,  
'Cuz him an' me is chums.

His clo'es ain't *quite* as good as mine,  
But I don't care for that;  
His mother makes his face 'ist shine,  
An' I *lent* him a hat.  
An' every mornin', 'ist by rule,  
W'en nine o'clock it comes,  
He takes my hand an' goes to school,  
'Cuz him an' me is chums.

Nobody better plague him, too,  
No matter if he's small,  
'Cuz I'm his friend, for tried and true,  
An' 'at's th' reason all  
Th' boys don't dare to plague him, 'cuz  
I 'ist wait till he comes,  
An' he walks close to me, he does,  
'Cuz him an' me is chums.

He fell an' hurt hi'self one day  
Th' summer before last,  
An' 'at's w'at makes him limp 'at way  
An' don't grow very fast.  
So w'en I get a piece of pie,  
Or maybe nuts or plums,  
I always give him some, 'cuz I  
Get lots — an' we are chums.

An' w'en it's nuttin' time, we go,  
An' I climb all th' trees,  
'Cuz he can't climb — he's hurt, you know —  
But he gets all he sees  
Come droppin' down, an' my! he's glad;  
An' w'en th' twilight comes  
He says w'at a fine time he had,  
'Cuz him an' me is chums.

But my! his mother's awful queer;  
'Cuz w'en we're home again,  
She wipes her eye — a great, big tear —  
An' says: "God bless you, Ben!  
Th' Lord will bless you all your days  
W'en th' great Judgment comes."  
But I say I don't need no praise,  
'Cuz him an' me is chums.

## THE LOST BOY

**L**ITTLE Boy Careless has strewn his blocks  
From end to end of the nursery;  
He has broken the top of the gaudy box  
That held sliced animals — My, Ah Me!  
His wooden soldiers are seamed and scarred  
From battle with him, and his jumping-jack  
Is lodged half-way from a blow too hard,  
Nor all of my coaxing will get him back.

Little Boy Careless has split his drum  
And bent the tube of his screeching fife  
Till all of its martial airs are dumb,  
And the doll that squeaked has lost her life  
From a mallet blow on her waxen head,  
And none of her sister dolls knows or cares  
How the sawdust in her is strewn and spread  
From the bedroom door to the hall downstairs.

Little Boy Careless has gone away  
And Big Boy Hopeful has come to me,  
The toys that were scattered here yesterday  
Are stored up there in the nursery.  
The broken drum and the jumping-jack,  
The waxen doll in her crib alone,  
Nor Little Boy Careless will e'er come back  
To scatter the toys by his years outgrown.

And ah, but the heart of me aches and cries  
For the Little Boy Careless to come and play,  
The light of the dawn in his big, brown eyes,  
With the toys that are gathered and laid away.  
The Big Boy Hopeful will come to pine  
For the world out there and will yearn to go,  
But the Little Boy Careless was mine, all mine,  
And that is the reason I loved him so!



## LINES TO A BABY GIRL

O H, she has such a way with her!  
     I stay with her  
     And play with her,  
 Her cheeks are round and dimpled and  
 Her eyes are Heaven's blue;  
 My life is spent quite half with her,  
 I laugh with her  
 And chaff with her,  
     Till she looks up with laughing eyes,  
     And all she says is "Gool!"

Sometimes I try to walk with her,  
 I talk with her  
 And rock with her;  
     She knows some way my love for her  
     Is tender and is true.  
 And so I sit and speak with her  
 And seek with her  
 The cheek of her  
     To brush with little kisses and  
     Quite all she says is "Gool!"

She toddles in to share with me  
 My chair with me;  
 Her air with me  
     Is that of queen imperious,  
     My heart her subject true.

## LINES TO A BABY GIRL

Upon the floor she lies with me  
And tries with me  
To rise with me  
    When romping time is over, and  
    She looks up and says "Goo!"

Oh, she is such a part of me,  
The heart of me,  
And art of me  
    Could not express my love for her,  
    So tender and so true;  
She is the treasure blessed of me,  
Heart's guest of me,  
The best of me,  
    This little baby girl of me  
    Who looks up and says "Goo!"

## LITTLE MISCHIEFUSS

SOMEBODY went and broke my doll, an' let  
her sawdust out

On Mamma's floor an' my! there's sawdust  
scattered all about!

Dess scandalous! An' bien by my Mamma'll come  
an' say:

"I see 'at Little Mischiefuss has been around today!"

An' sometimes w'en th' sugar bowl's lef' open, she  
says 'en:

"I dess 'at Little Mischiefuss has been around again!"

An' my! I'm awful much surprised! an' ast how does  
she know,

But she dess says a little bird flew in an' told her so!

One time somebody went, she did, and broke my  
jumpin'-jack

An' Mamma says: "I see 'at Little Mischiefuss is  
back."

An' w'en somebody spilled p'eserves right on the  
pantry shelf

She says: "I see 'at Mischiefuss has tried to he'p  
herself!"

One day somebody tore my dress an' en she says:

"I see

'At Little Mischiefuss is dess as busy as can be!"

An' my! I'm awful much surprised an' ast how does  
she know,

But she dess says a little bird flew in an' told her so!

Somebody frowed my blocks out doors an' 'en 'ey  
dot all wet

An' all peeled off tuz why it rained an' Mamma says  
she bet

'At Little Mischiefuss is back from Topsyturvytown

An' mus' be hidin' in th' house or else somew'eres  
aroun'.

Oncet Mamma's goin' t' spank her w'en she catches  
her, an' so

I ast her not to tuz she's dess a little girl, you know,

An' don't know any better 'an t' plague an' pester us,

Till she dess laughs, tuz why she says *I'm* Little Mis-  
chiefuss!

## THE TRAVELS OF MORTIMER BROWN

**T**HIS is the story of Mortimer Brown  
Who went for his mother some errands in  
town,

Who was told he must come back as quick as he could  
And as earnestly promised his mother he would.  
He went down the front steps full three at a time  
And swung on the gate, for the swinging was prime.

He teetered on all the loose boards in the walk  
And met Jimmy Brady and sat down to talk;  
He climbed up the trunk of a big tree that stands  
Not so far from his home, and he swung with both  
hands.

He passed the cow pasture and stopped for a stroll,  
Climbed the fence and turned twice on the very top  
pole.

Then he turned a few handsprings all through the  
long grass

And sat on the fence to watch Peter Bates pass  
With a big flock of sheep, and he got himself chased  
By the biggest black ram and he fell in his haste  
Down the bank of the brook and he sat there about  
Half an hour in the sun till his clothes were dried out.  
He laid off his coat since the day was so hot  
And chose a bypath through the strawberry plot;

## 76 THE TRAVELS OF MORTIMER BROWN

He gathered some berries to eat on his way  
Till alarmed by the watch-dog's deep, ominous bay.  
Then he followed a rabbit as far as he could  
Until it was lost in the depth of a wood,  
And marked a bee tree so to find it again  
When he and Jim Brady should visit Beech Glen.  
So tired then he was that he sat down to rest  
And he fell sound asleep with his coat and his vest

Spread under his head, when the rumble of wheels  
On the road waked him up and he saw Elmer Beals  
Driving by in the lane and he climbed up beside  
On a big load of squashes and had a fine ride,  
And helped lead the horses to water as soon  
As they both reached the town in the late afternoon.  
And then, oh, alas! The long list Mother wrote  
Of the things he should get had dropped out of his  
coat,

So he bought some stick candy and cookies — he  
knew  
Of the things she would need they must surely be two,  
And munching them sadly the whole of the way  
Back homeward he wondered what Mother would say.  
I wonder if ever in country or town  
You have known such a lad as this Mortimer Brown?

## ADVENTURERS THREE

I KNOW a little sailor who has never been to sea,  
But walks the deck of our back porch as bold  
as he can be.

He never shows a sign of fear when in the stoutest  
gale,

Nor ever lost a ship, although he never reefed a sail.  
I've heard him send his crew aloft when fearful tem-  
pests blew,

But though I've searched the rigging oft, I never saw  
the crew.

I'm sure he is a sailor, for his mother showed to me  
His clothes, such as the sailors wear when they go  
forth to sea.

I know a little hunter who has never fired a gun,  
But roams about our orchard with a painted wooden  
one;

A hunter of such prowess that he hasn't left a bear,  
A tiger or an animal of that description there.

I know he used to see them, for I've seen  
him creep and crawl,

And finally destroy one that I never saw at all.

I'm sure he was a hunter, for I saw his buckskins  
spread

Just as a plainsman leaves them — on the foot-board  
of his bed.

I know a little soldier who has never been to war,  
But wears a splendid uniform, all buttoned down  
before.

I've seen him drill in our back yard a dozen times a  
day,

I've seen him march and counter in a military way.

I've heard him shout commands with all a captain's  
dignity,

But though I've searched the lawn, I never saw his  
company.

I'm sure he was a soldier, for I saw the clothes he wore  
Last night beside his bed, when he had finished with  
the war.

Sometimes he gets a wetting when the seas are very  
high,

And has to have his sailor clothes hung on the line  
to dry,

So he becomes a soldier and upon a march he goes,  
And what he is this moment quite depends upon his  
clothes.

He never shoots a lion when he wears a sailor suit,  
Or walks the deck in buckskins, which he only wears  
to shoot,

And never thinks of drilling or of marching off to war  
Unless he wears his uniform with buttons down  
before.



## WHEN THEY LOVE YOU SO

**O**NE time I'm awful sick in bed,  
An' sometimes I'm delirious,  
'Cuz I got fever in my head,  
An' when I'm th' most serious  
My Pa, he sits beside of me  
An' 'en he rubs my head, an' 'en  
He says when I get well, why, he  
Won't ever scold his boy again.

An' 'en my Ma, she rubs my head  
'Ist burnin' hot, an' 'en her chin  
'Ist shivers an' she says: "Poor Ned!  
His little hands so white an' thin!"  
An' 'en she says she never knew  
How precious 'ist a boy could be,  
An' when I'm well she's goin' t' do  
'Ist what I want her to for me.

An' by and by my Aunty comes  
An' says when I get well why she  
Don't care if I have twenty drums,  
An' she will buy a sled for me.  
An' my big sister's goin' t' buy  
A really pony 'ist as quick  
As ever doctor says 'at I  
Am well again from bein' sick.

## WHEN THEY LOVE YOU SO

An' even our old hired man  
Comes in an' stays a while with me,  
Whenever doctor says he can,  
'Ist kind an' gentle as can be,  
'Cuz once he had a boy, an' 'en  
He had th' fever an' 'at's why  
He's awful kind to me an' when  
He sees me, why he starts t' cry.

An' even teacher comes to see  
Me on her way from school, an' 'en  
She says it won't be hard for me  
When I come back to school again.  
'Cuz she won't make my lessons long,  
Or keep me after school; an' she  
'Ist wants me to get well an' strong  
An' 'en she stoops an' kisses me.

An' 'at's th' way you really know  
How much they love you, when your head  
'Ist burnin' up an' you can't go  
Nowheres except to stay in bed.  
An' even if you're awful bad  
An' hot with fever, why, you know,  
It makes you feel 'ist sweet an' glad  
Becuz they all 'ist love you so.

## SOMEBODY DID

**S**OMEBODY stood up right on top of a chair  
An' reached in the cooky-jar, way, way up  
there,

W'en nobody's lookin' an' Mamma's asleep,  
An' all of us chinnern wuz playin' Bo-peep  
Now'eres near the pantry; an' tryin' to get  
Some cookies, an' someway the jar got upset,  
An' my! it 'ist busted all over the floor.  
But John, he ain't scairt; an' he rapped on the door,  
W'ile all of us chinnern we runned off an' hid,  
An' 'en he says: "Ma, see w'at Somebody did!"

An' all of us chinnern we runned off an' hid,  
'Cuz we don't know who done it—but Somebody did!

Somebody crawled up in the big leather chair  
By the lib'ary table w'at stood over there  
W'en we wuz a-playin' now'eres near the ink  
An' Mamma was sewin' — an' w'at do you think?  
Somebody upset it and knocked it, 'ist Chug!  
Right off'n the table an' down on the rug,  
An' my! it 'ist busted an' runned everyw'eres.  
But John, he ain't scairt; an' he runned right up-  
stairs,

W'ile all of us chinnern we runned off an' hid,  
An' 'en he says: "Ma, see w'at Somebody did!"

An' all of us chinnern we runned off an' hid,  
'Cuz we don't know who done it — but Somebody  
did!

An' wunst w'en the kitchen wuz all scrubbed so  
clean,

The floor wuz 'ist shiny as ever you seen,  
An' we wuz all playin' outdoors in the street,  
Somebody went in with the muddies' feet  
An' tracked it all over the floor, 'ist a sight;  
An' my! when we seen it we 'ist shook with fright,  
'Cuz none of us chinnern went near it all day.  
But John, he ain't scairt; an' he went right away,  
W'ile all of us chinnern we runned off an' hid,  
An' 'en he says: "Ma, see w'at Somebody did!"

An' all of us chinnern we runned off an' hid,  
'Cuz we don't know who done it—but Somebody  
did!

## THE WADERS

THE queerest things rained down all over our  
street,

With long legs, like spiders, and muddy  
brown feet;

They must have rained down, for I saw them all run  
Through puddles and mud ere the shower was done.  
They're some sort of Waders, and all over town  
Through pools and deep gutters they splash up and  
down,

Bareheaded, barelegged, barefooted and wet,  
The Waders of Frogpond — I hear them splash yet.

The rain fell in torrents, the gutters' deep tides  
Were black, and the rain barrels ran o'er their sides,  
The frothy white waters whirled from the eavespout,  
But with the first lull all the Waders came out.

They danced in the frogponds, they sounded the  
streams

In gutters and made the air shrill with their screams,  
They rolled up their dresses and trousers and dashed  
Through mud, froth and water, and waded and  
splashed.

And forth with the Waders came all kinds of dogs,  
Came sailors with bark boats, came navies of frogs.  
Came big rubber boots on such tiny brown legs,  
Came floating armadas of cans and half-kegs;

Came long poles for sounding, came all sorts of crafts,  
Unseaworthy boxes made over to rafts,  
I wonder if ever in my life again  
I'll see so much gladness come down with the rain.

They must have rained down, for a minute ago  
The frogpond was dry and deserted, you know;  
There wasn't a Wader, a dog or a craft,  
A pair of gum boots, a bark boat or a raft;  
The eave's but done dripping, scarce dry is the spout,  
When lo, all the navy of Waders is out!  
The pond's full of ships as the old Spanish Main.  
Who'd think so much fun could come down with the  
rain?



THE WADERS





## THE PRISONED PUPIL

**S**HE kept him aftur skool when awl the burds  
Were singen swetely in the woods an wurds  
Kood not deskribe his sufferens. the air  
Was full uv blossums an the urth was fare  
Ecksept to himm. becaws he did not no  
His jogafy she wood not let him go  
An when he hurd us cloas the dore the tears  
Rolld down his cheeks an he livd menny yeers  
In just a singul owr. it was like sum  
Old torchure ur sum krewel marturdum.

How kood he study when he noo that we  
Were goen gayly homewurd glad an free  
Wile he was kept a prizzuner becaws  
He did not no ware venna zweela was.  
An when he thot uv how weere ap too go  
In swimmen aftur skool his greef an wo  
Was almoast moar than he kood bare an yet  
She sturnly kept him thare an wood not let  
Him leev his seet altho he felt he must  
An so she bowd his spearut in the dust.

An aftur wile when its too late to play  
She lookt at him in sutch a skornful way  
Az tho he was a krimminle an sed  
He mite go home. his proud and hotty hed

Was bent with greef and he went slowly owt  
The skoolroom dore and then lookt awl abowt  
Az tho releest from prizzen an the brand  
Uv sin on him was moar than he kood stand.  
An he went sloly homewurd bowd with shaim  
O liburtey the krimes dun in thi naim.

## A PRAYER FOR JIMMY BANKS

**D**EAR Lord, excuse Jim Banks and me  
For hitting Aunty Griggs when we  
Threw snowballs at the cat, because  
We did not know where Aunty was!

Jim Banks and me are sorry, Lord,  
For drawing Teacher on the board,  
And after what we got, we do  
Not need more punishment from you!

Excuse Jim Banks especially,  
Because his mother's dead and he  
Just heard of you the other day  
And is too bashful yet to pray!

But you would like him if you knew  
Jim Banks as well as we all do.  
And if you have some clothes to spare  
Remember him, for he's quite bare!

He says old shoes will help him some,  
And some worn pants; and he will come  
Most any night, but where he stays  
He earns his keep by working days!

88      A PRAYER FOR JIMMY BANKS

And if there is an angel there  
Who might like him and you can spare,  
Would you mind telling this to him  
And see what he can do for Jim?

And Jimmy's hat is straw and old,  
You know the weather's pretty cold,  
And Jimmy's ears stick out into  
The weather, and his nose gets blue!

Dear Lord, please do the very best  
You can for him! I've got a vest  
And sweater on the closet shelf  
That I am going to give myself!

And beg your pardon, Lord, and pray  
My soul to keep; and Jimmy may  
Be President some day, and then  
We'll all be proud of him. Amen!



A PRAYER FOR JIMMY BANKS



## A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER

**D**EAR Lord, be good to Santa Claus,  
He's been so good to me;  
I never told him so because  
He is so hard to see.

He must love little children so  
To come through snow and storm;  
Please care for him when cold winds blow  
And keep him nice and warm.

Dear Lord, be good to him and good  
To Mary Christmas, too.

I'd like to tell them, if I could,  
The things I'm telling you.  
They've both been very good to me,  
And everywhere they go  
They make us glad; — no wonder we  
All learn to love them so.

Please have him button up his coat  
So it will keep him warm;  
And wear a scarf about his throat  
If it should start to storm.  
And when the night is dark, please lend  
Him light if stars are dim,  
Or maybe sometimes you could send  
An Angel down with him.

Please keep his heart so good and kind  
That he will always smile;  
And tell him maybe we will find  
And thank him after while.  
Please keep him safe from harm and keep  
Quite near and guard him when  
He's tired and lays him down to sleep.  
Dear Lord, please do! Amen.



## HENRY BLAKE'S CHUM

**H**ENRY BLAKE'S chum he had awful red  
hair,  
And most of his clothes were too small;  
And often and often he wore his feet bare  
Until it was late in the fall.  
But he would just whistle as though he had shoes,  
Was never discouraged or glum;  
And most any boy would be sorry to lose  
A fellow like Henry Blake's chum.

Henry Blake's chum, he knew all about trees,  
And woodticks and crickets and birds,  
And all of the things that a boy really sees  
But can't always tell them in words;  
And he knew where fish were the most apt to bite,  
And when the first blackberries come,  
And how to catch birds in a trap when they light —  
No wonder he's good for a chum.

Henry Blake's chum, he had rabbits for pets,  
And crows that he taught how to speak,  
And dogs that will haul you, and he often gets  
A new dog or two every week.  
And often he crawls up and catches a frog  
Between his first finger and thumb,  
Where it may be sitting alone on a log;  
And my! Henry's proud of his chum!

Henry Blake's chum, he knew all about flowers  
And always could tell you their name,  
And didn't mind thunder or lightning or showers  
Because he said it's all the same  
So long as you're barefoot and haven't much clothes.  
And he knew how partridges drum,  
And whistled just like a Bob White's whistle goes —  
No wonder he's somebody's chum.

Henry Blake's chum, he came up from the farm,  
And my! he was awful ashamed  
In school not to know the big bone in your arm  
Or what the equator was named.  
But when it came recess we all stood about  
And waited until he would come,  
And he told us things we had never found out —  
And my! Henry's proud of his chum!

## ONCE UPON A TIME

**O**NCE upon a time rare flowers grew  
On every shrub and bush we used to see;  
The skies above our heads were always blue,  
The woods held secrets deep for you and me;  
The hillsides had their caves where tales were told  
Of swart-cheeked pirates from a far-off clime,  
When cutlases were fierce and rovers bold —  
Don't you remember? — Once upon a time.

Once upon a time from sun to sun  
The hours were full of joy — there was no care,  
And webs of gaudy dreams in air were spun  
Of deeds heroic and of fortunes fair;  
The jangling schoolhouse bell was all the woe  
Our spirits knew, and in its tuneless chime  
Was all the sorrow of the long ago —  
Don't you remember? — Once upon a time.

Once upon a time the witches rode  
In sinister and ominous parade  
Upon their sticks at night, and queer lights glowed  
With eery noises by the goblins made;  
And many things mysterious there were  
For boyish cheeks to pale at through the grime  
That held them brown; and shadows queer would  
stir —  
Don't you remember? — Once upon a time.

Once upon a time our faith was vast  
To compass all the things on sea and land  
That boys have trembled o'er for ages past,  
Nor ever could explain or understand,  
And in that faith found happiness too deep  
For all the gifted tongues of prose or rime,  
And joys ineffable we could not keep —  
Don't you remember? — Once upon a time.



ONCE UPON A TIME



## THE WAY TO SCHOOL

**F**IVE minutes chasing butterflies  
Way over, off the road;  
Five minutes watching Willie Price  
Do tricks with his pet toad;  
Five minutes helping Gibbsie get  
His pig back in the pen —  
I wonder if it's school-time yet?  
I guess I'm late again.

I think I lost a little time  
Because I walked so slow  
Where Johnny Watkins lost a dime  
A day or two ago.  
It's underneath the leaves somewhere,  
And Johnny feels so blue  
That I just stopped a minute there  
Because he asked me to.

And then it rained a little bit,  
And Dominick McPhee  
Had his straw hat and had to sit  
Under a good thick tree,  
Or else he'd get it spoiled and get  
The top all swelled. You see,  
A straw hat is not safe to wet —  
His kind, especially.

## THE WAY TO SCHOOL

And after we had saved his hat  
From getting spoiled for him,  
A big woodpecker came and sat  
Upon a rotten limb;  
And Johnny said when they're about,  
Somebody told the boys,  
You see a lot of worms come out  
To see what makes the noise.

So then we boys all stayed about  
A couple minutes more,  
In hopes to see the worms come out  
Which he was rapping for;  
But after he went b-r-r-r! and b-r-r-r!  
A while, he flew away,  
And Johnny said he guessed there were  
No worms at home that day.

So then we hurried up, and ran  
As fast as we could run,  
To get there just as school began.  
And just when it's begun  
I had to run back to the tree  
To get my slate and rule;  
And yet the teacher cannot see  
Why boys are late for school.



## A PRESENT FOR LITTLE BOY BLUE

**O**UR Neighbor, he calls me his Little Boy Blue  
Whenever he goes by our yard;  
And he says, "Good-morning" or "How-do-you-do?"

But sometimes he winks awful hard.  
I guess he don't know what my name really is,  
Or else he forgot, if he knew;  
And my! You would think I am really part his —  
He calls me *his* Little Boy Blue!

Our Neighbor, he told me that Little Boy Blue  
Once stood all his toys in a row,  
And said, "Now, don't go till I come back for you" —  
But that was a long time ago.  
And one time, at Christmas, when I had a tree,  
He brought me a sled, all brand-new,  
And smiled when he said it was partly for me  
And partly for Little Boy Blue.

Our Neighbor, he's not going to have any tree,  
So he says the best he can do  
Is try to get something to partly give me  
And partly give Little Boy Blue,  
Because, if he's here, it would make him so glad,  
And he said he knew it was true  
That ever and ever so many folks had  
A boy just like Little Boy Blue.

98 A PRESENT FOR LITTLE BOY BLUE

Our Neighbor, he calls me his Little Boy Blue,  
And said he would like to help trim  
Our tree when it came — he would feel that he knew  
It was partly for me and for him.  
He said he would fix it with lights and wax flowers,  
With popcorn and berries — you see,  
He'd like to come over and help to trim ours —  
He's not going to have any tree!

## THE EVOLUTION OF AN ADOPTION

**H**E'S 'ist a little orfant boy  
W'at goes to school with me;  
An' ain't got any parents 'cuz  
His folks is dead, you see.  
An' w'en he sees my toys an' things —  
My, but his eyes 'ist shine;  
An' he ain't got no marbles, so  
I give him half of mine.

An' once it's orful stormy w'en  
It's noon an' he can't go  
Back where he works for board an' clo'es  
To get his lunch, an' so  
I had some san'wiches an' things  
'At he thought was 'ist fine,  
An' 'cuz he didn't have no lunch  
I give him half of mine.

An' once w'en we went down to fish  
He come along with me,  
An' w'en we're there says he 'ist wish  
'At he could fish. You see  
He's orful poor an' brought a pole  
But didn't have a line,  
An' w'en I saw how bad he felt  
I give him half of mine.

An' one time I 'ist told my Ma  
    How he don't have much fun  
'Cuz he ain't got no Ma or Pa  
    Or Aunt or any one.  
An' 'en I told her how I thought  
    'At it would be 'ist fine  
'Cuz he ain't got no mother if  
    I'd give him half of mine.

He ain't my brother, really true,  
    He's 'ist an orfant, so  
My Ma she took him, 'cuz she knew  
    He had no place to go.  
I'm awful glad we got him an'  
    My Pa thinks it 'ist fine —  
He didn't have no mother, so  
    I give him half of mine.

## SOME GIRLS THAT MAMMA KNEW

**M**Y Mamma says 'at once 'ere was  
A little girl she knew  
Who went an' cried, an' 'ist because —  
Because she wanted to;  
An' w'ile her face was all askew  
The wind changed, so they say,  
An' Mamma told me 'at it's true,  
Her face 'ist staid 'at way!  
An' w'en she told me 'at, w'y nen  
I said I'll never cry again.

My Mamma said 'at once she heard  
A little girl like me  
Tell 'ist one fib, an' says, my word!  
Her Mamma looked to see  
W'ere was her tongue, an' goodness me!  
Her mouth was 'ist all bare,  
An' w'ere her tongue 'ud ought to be  
There wasn't any there!  
An' w'en she told me 'at, w'y nen  
I said I'll never fib again!

My Mamma knew a little girl  
'At used to run away  
W'en her dear mother 'd start to curl  
Her hair; an' one fine day

Some gypsies took her off, somehow,

An' stole her from her home,

An' my! Her hair is awful now,

'Cause gypsies never comb!

An' since she told me 'at, w'y nen

I never runned away again!

An' never don't make fun, she says,

Of folks 'at's blind or lame,

Or got red hair or warts, unless

You want to be the same.

'Cause lots of times it happens so,

An' surely if you do,

You never, never, never know

What's going to happen you.

An' since she told me 'at, w'y nen

I never don't make fun again.

## GONE

**H**E fell in a puddle and muddied his dress,  
He struck little Bob with a hammer, I guess;  
He cut sister's curls with a big pair of shears  
And left ragged edges down over her ears;  
He muddied the floor that was just scrubbed so clean,  
He lighted a match near the canned gasoline,  
He broke all his soldiers and smashed all his toys,  
And yet we forgave him, for boys will be boys.

He singed the cat's whiskers and cut off its tail  
And then turned it loose with its discordant wail;  
He dropped bread and jelly upon a big chair  
And thought of it only when Auntie sat there;  
He sheared the pet poodle one midwinter day,  
His father is frantic, his mother is gray,  
His Aunt and his Grandma protest at his noise,  
And then all forgive him, for boys will be boys.

He clamors for cookies, for jelly and jam,  
He shuts ne'er a door, but he gives it a slam,  
He dabbles in paint, be it red, blue or green,  
He loves to play hob with the sewing machine;  
And then — well, he's gone into trousers and vests,  
For years must be passing and time never rests,  
And some day we look at a picture — and then  
We wish — strange it is — that we had him again.

## THE NEIGHBOR'S BOYS

SOMEbody shot our cat's eye out,  
An' stole our gate an' just about  
Scared Aunt Sophia Jane to death  
So's she could hardly get her breath,  
By puttin' on some sheets, all white,  
'At just gave her a turble fright,  
An' who on earth do you suppose  
Put on them big, white ghostes' clothes  
An' made that turble screechy noise? —  
The neighbor's boys!

An' every night it's dark, you know,  
Somebody plays some tick-tack-toe  
On folkeses' windows what's a-scared,  
An' just as if they never cared  
If they get caught or not, an' when  
You're gone to bed they come again  
Until you're just so nervous you  
Don't hardly know just what to do;  
An' who makes such a scary noise?  
The neighbor's boys.

An' 'en somebody tears your clothes  
An' skins your face an' hurts your nose  
Until it bleeds, an' then your Ma  
Says 'at she never, never saw





THE NEIGHBOR'S BOYS



Such heathen youngsters, an' they come  
An' break your sled an' pound your drum  
Until it busts, an' wont go 'way,  
It ain't no matter what you say,  
An' they're the ones 'at break your toys —  
The neighbor's boys.

An' my, it's funny, 'cause, you know  
You ain't the only ones 'at's so.  
'Cause all the next door neighbors say  
It seems e'zactly the same way,  
An' when their boys gets hurtet so's  
It gives 'em turble bloody nose,  
An' some one shoots their cat's eye out,  
An' plays tick-tack, they know about  
Who does it an' who makes the noise —  
The neighbor's boys!

## A QUIET AFTERNOON

**M**Y Mamma, she did go to call about an hour  
ago,  
An' said if I ain't bad at all an' stayed at  
home with Flo,  
Which is the maid that cooks for us, she'd bring me  
something good,  
But if I'm one bit misschefuss she didn't think she  
would.

An' my! I'm still, 'ist like a mouse. I never went  
outdoors,  
But 'ist sat down, inside 'the house, an' took her  
bureau drawers  
An' emptied 'em 'ist one by one, an' w'en they're  
emptied 'en  
I 'ist looked through what's there for fun an' put 'em  
back again!

An' 'en I found the nicest ink, an' one of 'em was  
red,  
An' one was black an' 'en I think I spilt some on the  
bed,  
But my! I wiped it up, 'ist so, an' sopped it with a  
quilt  
So clean you wouldn't hardly know it's ever once  
been spilt.

Well, 'en I looked up on the shelf an' found her scissors there

An' got 'em down all by myself an' cut off all my hair,  
'Tuz I don't think it's nice for girls like me 'at's almost through

First reader to wear such a curls like Mamma makes me do.

'En Flo gave me some bread and jam, 'tuz I 'ist cried and cried

'Ist tuz I'm hungry now, I am, an' 'en I went inside,  
An' maybe I did let it lay around the room somewhere,

'Tuz Flo came in to watch me play and squoshed it on a chair.

An' after while I wish my Ma would 'ist come back, she would,

'Tuz my, I'm gettin' drefful tired of simply bein' good.

My eyes, 'ey're 'ist so full of sand an' heavy, 'ist like lead,

Oh-oh! I dess it's Sleepyland! I dess I'll go to bed!

## THE OWNERLESS TOYS

**O**UR Uncle Bill's attic is half full of toys,  
With some that are almost brand-new;  
He's got things up there for most all kinds  
of boys

From ten years old clear down to two.  
And one day he gave me some books from up  
there

Like boys had a long time ago;  
And I asked if the boy they belong to would care,  
But he just sort of smiled and said no.

Sometimes we would go in his attic to play  
And find such a lot of fine things,  
A whole lot of picture books all piled away  
And tops that were wound up with strings.  
And Uncle Bill told us to use what was there  
Just as if it was ours, and we'd go,  
But we'd ask if the boy they belong to would care,  
And he just sort of smiled and said no.

And my! There were sleds with their runners all  
rust,  
And five or six good pairs of skates,  
Some old-fashioned toys that were covered with  
dust,  
And fishlines and schoolbooks and slates,

Which Uncle Bill told us we fellows might share,  
But always put back when we go;  
And we thought that the boy they belong to might  
care,  
But he just sort of smiled and said no.

And the boy they belong to, I guess, was away.  
At least, we all thought he must be;  
For all through the house they could hear us at play,  
But he never came up there to see.  
And we would pile everything back up with care  
And ask Uncle Bill when we'd go  
If the boy they belong to would know we'd been there,  
But he just sort of smiled and said no.

Our Uncle Bill's attic is half full of toys,  
Some old ones and some almost new;  
He's got things up there for most all kinds of boys  
From ten years old clear down to two.  
And often when we boys go up there to play  
We ask Uncle Bill when we go  
If the boy they belong to will be back that day,  
And he smiles sort of sad and says no.

## THE STRANGER

SERIOUS-MINDED little maid,  
Wondering and half afraid,  
Half inclined to speak with me,  
Half disposed to let me be;  
Hesitating yet, and shy,  
Half a twinkle in your eye,  
Half in doubt and half in fear,  
Staying neither far nor near.

How I wonder what you see  
With those eyes that question me;  
What the instinct bids you know  
If I may be friend or foe;  
Fawnlike, full of grace and sweet,  
Ready with fast-flying feet  
In the orchard's deepest shade  
To find cover, little maid.

Grave and curious little lass,  
Like a wild bird in the grass,  
Still intently watching me,  
With your wings half spread, to see  
If my smile bodes good or ill,  
Willing to make friends and still  
Undecided if to stay  
Here and near or fly away.



## THE STRANGER

III

Serious-minded little maid,  
When, with smiles and unafraid,  
O'er the lawn you come to me,  
Stranger to you though I be,  
When your curious eyes have tried  
Soul with mine and, satisfied,  
Looked still into mine and smiled,  
Blessed am I, little child.

Blessed am I to be just  
Worthy of your childish trust,  
More than conqueror of kings  
When the wild bird of your wings  
Bids you fly not forth but see  
Something tender, kind, in me;  
Oh, the gladness you have laid  
At my heart's gate, little maid!

## IN VACATION TIME

**T**HERE'S a hole in his hat with the hair sticking through,  
And a toe that peeps out from a hole in his shoe;

There's a patch in his trousers, a darn in his hose,  
And a freckle that tilts on the bridge of his nose;  
But oh, in his heart there's the glimmer and shine  
Of a sun that I wish could be shining in mine.

There's a smudge on his face that is dusty and dark,  
But a song in his heart like the song of a lark;  
There's a rent in his coat where the lining shows through,  
But the whistle he tunes to the wild bird is true;  
And, oh, in his heart, with a sparkle like wine,  
Is a gladness I wish could be sparkling in mine.

There's an imp in his hair that may keep it awry,  
But a twinkle so rare in the blue of his eye;  
There's an uneven slant of his trousers, made fast  
With a nail through their tops, for a button won't last;  
But deep in his heart lies a spring cool and fine  
Of good cheer that I wish could be bubbling in mine.

There's a tan on his cheek where the flush of health  
glows,

And the skin has all peeled from the tip of his nose;  
His pockets are bulged with tops, marbles and strings,  
With jack-knives and other uncountable things;  
But the brooks and the woods bring a music divine  
To his ears that I wish they were bringing to mine.

## BEREAVED

I GUESS he must be awful old; we had him years  
and years,  
And he's so old the ends were worn all off of  
both his ears.  
He couldn't hardly eat, because his teeth were all  
worn out,  
And all his legs got stiff, so he could hardly drag  
about.  
One day he lay down by the house, right near the  
cellar door,  
And gasped and gasped for breath, until he couldn't  
any more;  
So I went out and patted him, and when he heard  
me call  
He looked at me and wagged his tail, which died the  
last of all.

My! he was black and curly once, when he was new  
and young,  
And he would open up his mouth at us and curl his  
tongue,  
Just like he laughed, and play with us; and he would  
go into  
The creek, and bring our hats to us, or anything we  
threw.  
In winter we would hitch him up, and he would haul  
our sled,

And walk or trot or run with it, or anything we said;  
So when he wagged his tail at me I laid him right  
    beside  
The cellar door, and then I went behind the barn and  
    cried.

He was a friend of all the boys, and when they came  
    to play  
He'd wag his tail and bark and look at them the  
    smartest way;  
And he'd pretend to bite at them and nip their pants,  
    but he  
Would never bite, 'cause he was just as kind as he  
    could be.  
And Henry Watson looked at him beside the cellar  
    door,  
And said, "He'll never haul us boys on our sled any  
    more."  
He turned his ears back straight and nice; he liked  
    him awful well;  
Because he had tears in his eyes, and then a big one  
    fell.

So after while we got a spade, and Billy Gibson came,  
And Tommy Dean and Eddie Brink, and they all  
    felt the same.  
We dug some turf up in the yard, right underneath  
    a tree,  
And laid him in and left him there, all covered care-  
    fully;

It was an awful solemn day for all of us, for though  
He'd got worn out and couldn't eat, we boys all liked  
him so;  
And Eddie Brink, he didn't think the Lord would  
really care  
If we boys sang a hymn for him and said a little  
prayer.

My! it was awful sad that day! And Tommy said he  
thought  
We wouldn't play that afternoon, because he'd rather  
not.  
And Mamma made some nice ice-cream, which cheered  
us up, but when  
We wanted her to eat she said she couldn't eat just  
then.  
And Amy Robbins heard of it, and brought some  
leaves and flowers  
To scatter over him, because he was a friend of ours;  
And I told her I patted him, and when he heard me  
call  
He looked at me and wagged his tail, which died the  
last of all.

## TWO LITTLE MAIDS

**L**ITTLE Miss Nothing-to-do  
Is fretful and cross and so blue,  
And the light in her eyes  
Is all dim when she cries  
And her friends, they are few, Oh, so few!  
Her dolls, they are nothing but sawdust and clothes,  
Whenever she wants to go skating it snows,  
And everything's criss-cross, the world is askew!  
I wouldn't be Little Miss Nothing-to-do  
Now, true,  
I wouldn't be Little Miss Nothing-to-do  
Would you?

Little Miss Busy-all-day  
Is cheerful and happy and gay  
And she isn't a shirk  
For she smiles at her work  
And she romps when it comes time for play.  
Her dolls, they are princesses, blue-eyed and fair,  
She makes them a throne from a rickety chair,  
And everything happens the jolliest way,  
I'd rather be Little Miss Busy-all-day,  
Hurrah,  
I'd rather be Little Miss Busy-all-day,  
I say.

## A NEW CHRISTMAS CAROL

COME, children, I'll tell you a wonderful tale,  
I learned it one night in a dream;  
The snow lay all white and the full moon  
shone pale,

The housetops about were agleam;  
I'd fallen asleep in my big easy chair,  
I heard a gruff voice in my ear,  
I knew that Saint Nicholas surely was there  
And listened to see what I'd hear.

"Come, follow with me," were the first words he  
said,

"I'm off for my Palace of Snow;  
I've emptied my pack of each doll, toy and sled,  
It's time for old Santa to go.  
But, Oh, I've a treat waiting for me tonight,  
I've planned it for years in my mind;  
Come, follow with me, while the moon is still  
bright" —

I rose and we sped like the wind.

We flew like a flash to the Palace of Snow,  
By hilltop and valley and plain,  
Nor ever I will be permitted, I know,  
To make such a journey again;  
And there in the warmest and cosiest nook



He bade me sit down while he dressed  
In robes of rich scarlet and said to me: "Look!  
Here come the Child Hosts of the Blest."

A flash of his eye and my wonderment grew,  
A word and a wave of his rod,  
Forth came Orphan Annie and Little Boy Blue,  
And Wynken and Blynken and Nod.  
With Alice from Wonderland, blue-eyed and fair,  
Tom Tucker — Jack Horner with him,  
And Oh, at the last, can you guess who was there? —  
Poor Topsy and Dear Tiny Tim!

He spread out his arms and they passed one by one,  
Each laden with treasures and toys,  
And never or ever a night of such fun  
Was passed by such girls and such boys;  
Nor ever will Annie be orphan with him,  
He told me, and Little Boy Blue  
Came back from the shadows all misty and dim,  
So glad that the toy dog was true.

And always and always he'll keep them with him,  
He told me, through all of the years,  
Poor Topsy and Alice and Dear Tiny Tim,  
And Topsy will know no more tears.  
But tales of them all he will bring Christmas night,  
The brightest and sweetest and best,  
That our boys and girls may know joy and delight  
From Santa's Child Hosts of the Blest!

## THE RECONCILIATION OF PA

**M**Y Pa, he's disappointed tuz I ain't a boy.  
'At is  
He ain't now but he used to was. He likes  
me tuz I'm his  
An' buys me lots of toys an' things; but w'en I first  
begun  
Ma said he's awful fond of boys an' 'ist wished I was  
one.  
But now he don't care any more, tuz I'm growed up  
so nice  
He likes me better 'n before, an' there ain't any price  
'At you could offer him for me an' he would take it,  
tuz  
I'm so much nicer, don't you see, 'an my Pa thought  
I was.

W'en I'm come first my Mamma said 'at he 'ud  
ruther I  
'Ud been a boy the stork 'ud brought; she says she  
don't see w'y,  
Tuz she 'ist thinks 'at little girls are awful nice, an'  
w'en  
You wash 'eir face an' brush 'eir turls, 'ey're nicer 'n  
ever 'en.  
But he is disappointed tuz at first he didn't know  
How rilly truly nice I was; but w'en I came to grow

He wouldn't take the world for me, so he told Ma,  
 'ist tuz  
 I'm so much nicer, don't you see, 'an my Pa thought  
 I was.

An' my Ma says 'at if I grow up 'ist so nice an' sweet  
 As I am now, my Pa 'll know 'at stork was hard to  
 beat;

An' he won't never wish again 'at I'm a boy, 'ist tuz  
 He'll know how sweet I am, an' 'en he's glad I'm  
 w'at I was;

Tuz boys are awful nice at first, 'at is, you think they  
 are,

An' w'en they're big they're 'ist the worst! An' girls  
 is better far,

An' Ma says if you want 'em sweet, 'ist sweet as  
 sweet can be,

You'll find it awful hard to beat a little girl like me.

## A WORLD WITHOUT CARE

**T**HERE'S a song that is sweet  
And a whistle that's clear;  
There's a dog at his feet  
And another one near;  
There's a fish in the brook  
And a line that is whirled,  
There's a worm on a hook —  
All is well with the world.

There's a rock that has slipped  
From the bank to the brink,  
There's a hat that is dipped  
In the brook for a drink;  
There's a line that is cast  
Where an eddy is swirled,  
There's a fat perch caught fast —  
All is well with the world.

There's a heartful of joy  
And a handful of fish,  
There's a satisfied boy  
Glad as gladness could wish;  
There are leaves green and cool  
Where the fat perch is curled,  
There are more in the pool —  
All is well with the world.

There's an angler come home  
At the close of the day,  
There's a chirp in the gloam  
Of a whistle so gay,  
There's a monster near-caught  
Where the foam danced and curled,  
There's a meal piping hot —  
All is well with the world.

## RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL

I KNOW where's the happiest Kingdom in all of  
the world I have seen,  
No bigger than Grandfather's orchard, and all  
of it's grassy and green,  
It has but a few dozen people, the happiest young-  
sters alive,  
'Tis ruled by a Princess of seven, and one little soldier  
of five;  
There's one little crown made of daisies and one little  
sword made of tin,  
And one little drum that goes rolling betimes with a  
terrible din;  
You'd think that a war was beginning by all of the  
noise that is made,  
When, really, it's only the army declaring itself on  
parade.

In all of the bounds of the Kingdom there isn't a  
book or a chore;  
The reign of the Princess begins when the schoolday  
is over at four;  
Her castle with turrets and towers is right near a big  
apple tree.  
It isn't a visible castle, but if you were there you  
could see;

And if you should chance to be looking that way  
when the proud Princess comes,  
You'd see a bold soldier go marching and hear a  
fierce rattle of drums,  
You'd see loyal subjects and happy, with no thought  
of table or rule,  
You'd want to belong to the Kingdom — the King-  
dom of Right-After-School!

It's really a well-behaved people — they put by their  
slates and their books  
And have little use for an army except as a matter of  
looks;  
But nobody dares say addition, division, subtrac-  
tion — if you  
Should mention a one of these subjects the tin sword  
would run you right through!  
But you can say swinging or jumping or follow-my-  
leader, nor fear  
You break any law of the country — and if from  
your window you hear  
A chorus of voices or laughter, when evening grows  
twilit and cool,  
You'll know 'tis the music they make in the King-  
dom of Right-After-School!

There's not a sad heart in the Kingdom, nor ever or  
ever a tear,  
And all of the sorrows of schooldays are lost or for-  
gotten in here;

'The make-believe fairies go singing with songs that  
are wondrously sweet;  
The green turf is flecked with white dresses and pat-  
ters with fast-flying feet;  
It's just between School's-Out and Teatime — an  
hour or so of the day,  
And often I see them there crowning with daisies the  
Princess of Play;  
Then some one calls: "Supper-time, children!" —  
when evening grows twilit and cool.  
It fades from my sight till tomorrow — the Kingdom  
of Right-After-School!



## A PLEA FOR OLD FRIENDS

I WAS fond, indeed, of Paul Revere,  
In the days of my earlier age,  
And the picture of him stands out clear  
From the old school reader page;  
And I've seen the light in the belfry tower,  
I've heard the hoof beats, too,  
But, alas! alas! in an evil hour,  
They say it's all untrue!

And Barbara Frietchie — all these years,  
From guileless boyhood down,  
I've seen the flag and heard the cheers  
In far off Fredericktown;  
And I've seen Jackson lift his hat  
And bid his troops march on,  
But now, alas! they tell me that  
Is a dreamer's tale, and gone!

And oft at night, as though 't were real,  
I've heard the flame's wild roar,  
I've seen Jim Bludso hold the wheel  
Till the last galoot's ashore;  
I thought the better of men for it,  
And of duty to die or do,  
But some wise men, of little wit,  
Say none of the tale is true.

Oh, leave me the ride of Paul Revere  
And the story of Fredericktown!  
The nozzle agin' th' bank — so clear  
From guileless boyhood down!  
Leave me the curfew that was not rung,  
Leave them for me and you;  
And let more songs like these be sung,  
Though none of the tales be true!

## THE BOYVILLE CADETS

**H**ARK! What is that clatter and patter of feet?  
The Boyville Cadets are half-way up the street!

They march two by two, a most bloodthirsty horde,  
Led by Captain Tom Jones, with a big wooden sword.  
They're mostly barelegged and coatless and brown,  
A make-believe army from all parts of town,  
With guns on their shoulders all whittled from lath,  
And woe to the foeman who crosses their path.

Bob Brown has a fife and Bill Blake has a drum.  
See now in what martial procession they come;  
Jim Dobbs waves the flag with victorious flirt,  
A long willow pole with a red woolen shirt.  
And Corporal Brownlegs, he squints down the line:  
"Attention! Right shoulder! Guide right!" Oh, it's  
fine

To know you've no troubles, no worries, no debts,  
And march down the street with the Boyville Cadets!

Now Sergeant Big Freckles cries, "Hep! Hep!" and  
"Hep!"

To see that the army keeps right perfect step.  
And General Red Hair reins up with great force,  
To shout some command from his make-believe horse.

Then Captain Tom Jones gives a formal salute,  
And rests his big sword on the toe of his boot,  
For woe to the foe that harasses or frets  
The solid platoon of the Boyville Cadets!

Then Corporal Barefoot is ordered to scout  
For bloodthirsty redskins, and look all about.  
They march, single file, through the thick-growing  
trees,  
For favorite haunts of the red men are these.  
Far off in the woods, is an ear-splitting shout.  
Alas! 'Tis the death-cry of Barefoot, the scout!  
And now all the air rings with war-whoops and  
cries;  
Bang! bang! go the laths, and the red savage dies!

A hand-to-hand fight, and the battle is done;  
In the orchard the redskins lie dead, every one.  
But, oh, woe is me! For all gory and red  
Lies Barefoot, the scout, by the red men struck  
dead!

The Boyville Cadets lift him out of the dirt;  
They wrap him about with the old woolen shirt;  
And then, with drums muffled and heads sadly  
bowed,  
They bear him back home, with the flag for a  
shroud.

Then General Red Hair, in orders, gives thanks  
To all of his soldiers, and bids them break ranks.

For out of the distance he hears a shrill call:

“Tom! Joe! Bill! Jim! Children! Why, where are  
you all?”

Then Barefoot, the scout, to his life is restored,  
And Captain Tom Jones hides his big wooden sword;  
For there's wood to be split and there's water to get  
In the dull private life of the Boyville Cadet.

## A LITTLE BOY I KNOW

**A** LITTLE boy I used to know, from whom  
I've been away,  
Oh, very many years, took me upon a trip  
today.

It seemed so good to be with him, and he was glad  
to be

Companion, guide, and friend until the journey's  
end with me.

I quite forgot my cares with him, nor could I well be  
sad,

As long as he was at my side, for he was blithe and  
glad,

And oh, the merry songs he sang, the tunes he whis-  
tled clear

That I had half forgotten till he sang and whistled  
here!

By many a winding stream we went, and many a  
limpid brook,

Where oft he bade me stop and cast a line and fishing  
hook

Until we drew a struggling fish from out some eddy  
deep,

And once upon the bank we lay and both fell fast  
asleep.

By clover meadows sweet we strayed, where cow bells  
tinkled far,  
Deep in the woods where hollow logs and darting  
squirrels are,  
And here and there he bade me stop till he would  
climb a tree  
To shake a limb and rattle down some nuts for him  
and me.

Down many a shady lane we walked, through some  
familiar land,  
Where dreams of faces long forgot arose on every  
hand;  
We saw a cottage by the road, and in the kitchen  
door  
A woman with the sweetest face — a glimpse and  
nothing more.  
And as she vanished from our sight I saw the tear-  
drops shine  
In both his eyes, and I could feel the tears well up  
in mine;  
He plucked his shabby sleeve to brush the teardrops  
from his eye  
And whispered, "I saw Mother there!" and I said,  
"So did I!"

And there were spreading apple trees where oft he  
bade me lie  
Upon the grass and watch the clouds that swept  
across the sky.

He lent me many a dream to dream — of fame and  
love and truth,  
Such dreams as Fancy stores within the Treasure-  
heart of Youth!  
Ofttimes we found a sparkling spring and lay upon  
the brink  
Our lips laved with its bubbling stream, to drink and  
drink and drink;  
And oh, the joys we two renewed, and oh, the hum  
of bees,  
The songs of birds, the violets and treasures such as  
these!

A little boy I used to know, a lad of nine or ten,  
Took me a journey glad today — I hope he'll come  
again  
To take my hand and walk with me where golden  
sunshine gleams,  
To lead me by familiar ways and lend me all his  
dreams!  
To keep me near the hopes we had, to whistle merry  
tunes,  
To find me dawns like those we knew and sunny  
afternoons;  
A little boy his Mother loved! — a lad of nine or ten;  
Perhaps you've known and walked with him — I  
hope he comes again!



## ASLEEP AT THE CIRCUS

**N**OW the last roasted peanut is swallowed,  
The last clown has gone on parade;  
The last sugared popcorn been followed  
By sips of the last lemonade.

His eyes, once so big, that shone brightly  
Through all of the glad afternoon,  
Are shut, and his fingers close tightly  
And cling to his gaudy balloon.

The last acrobat's been applauded,  
And shuffled his way from the mat;  
The last bareback rider's been lauded;  
The clown, with his sugar-loaf hat,  
Has gone with his powder and spangles;  
The diver has made his last leap;  
And here in my arms are brown tangles  
Of curls, and a boy fast asleep.

One sticky hand rests on my shoulder,  
One holds fast the gaudy balloon,  
That shrinks, and before it's much older  
Will fade like the glad afternoon.  
His dreams, it may be, of the maddest  
Of somersaults, recklessly hurled;  
The tiredest, sleepest, gladdest  
And stickiest lad in the world!

And oh, but the spangles were splendid!  
And oh, but the music was grand!  
The side-splitting clown laughter blended  
With soul-stirring airs by the band,  
Till naught of the glad marvel lingers  
Save what in his dreams he may keep,  
As he clasps his balloon with close fingers  
And rests in my arms, fast asleep.

And so from these joys without number,  
Ere aught of the glitter was gone,  
He went to his dream-laden slumber,  
Where on plays the music, and on.  
For him all the revel is maddest,  
For him not a flag has been furled,  
The tiredest, sleepest, gladdest  
And stickiest lad in the world!



ASLEEP AT THE CIRCUS



## THE BARRIERS

**S**CRUB out his freckles, 'twas Nature who gave  
'em;

Silence his whistle and comb out his hair,  
Muffle his footsteps, for People — Lord save 'em —

Want something noiseless and soulless and fair;  
Bleach out the spots where the Summer sun kissed  
him,

Still all the tunes and the bird calls he knew,  
Then, when he's boy no more, who could resist  
him?

Sun and the Wind, here's a lesson for you.

Sun and the Wind and the freshness of showers,

How could you tempt him to revel and roam  
Past the long hedges and through the wild flowers?

Did you not know it would cost him a home?  
Did you not know when the gay bluebird glistened

Up on the bough and with wonder he rose,  
Rose with his heart beating glad, as he listened,

Did you not know it would freckle his nose?

Hide your heads, Daisies, that wave over yonder,

Gleam in the sunlight and dance by the creek,  
You bade him leave the pale shadow and wander —

Did you not know he might freckle his cheek?

You, too, the larks through the green meadows wing-  
ing,

Did you not tempt him with glad song and free?  
Why did you not let him learn through your singing  
He would be outcast through following thee?

Heartless blackberries, you led him from shelter;  
Nuts, without shame, you did bid him to climb;  
Butterflies bright, that he chased helter-skelter,  
Have you no shame for the depths of your crime?  
What if the heart of him beats but the truer,  
What if the soul of him still sweeter grows,  
What if the eyes of him sparkle the truer,  
Do you not see you have freckled his nose?

Scrub out the freckles — oh, well, doesn't matter;  
Maybe they'll wash out with plentiful tears;  
Muffle his footsteps, that no boyish patter  
Rise to offend supersensitive ears;  
Bid him not whistle the songs the fields taught him,  
Let him be pale, still, anaemic, and thin,  
Teach him and bleach him, and when you have got  
him  
Thoroughly colorless, let him come in!

## THE PLAINT OF THE NEW DOLL

**W**E dot a doll to our house;  
It tum on Trißsmus day;  
It wuzn't hangin' on a tree;  
It tum some uzzer way;  
'Ey wouldn't let me play wiz it,  
'Ey said 'at it might fall;  
En so it laid 'ere all day long  
En squall en squall en squall.

'E funniestes' 'ittle sing,  
Espeshully fer a doll;  
En Mamma told me wen it tum  
It wuzn't dressed at all;  
'Ey only let me take one peek,  
I ast 'em if I tould  
'Es press to see if it would squeak  
Like my own dolly would.

En 'en 'ey laughed en laughed en laughed,  
En wouldn't tell me why;  
I dess tant 'magine why 'ey laughed,  
It ain't no use t' try;  
En how 'ey fussed en fussed en fussed  
En I dess almos' all  
'E uncles en 'e aunts I dot  
Tum in to see 'at doll.

En 'en 'ey laughed en Papa laughed  
 'Es like a silly boy;  
 I never saw growed up folks make  
 Such fuss about a toy.  
 I dess I dot mos' fifteen dolls,  
 'E nices' ever wuz,  
 En never tised one half as much  
 As my own Papa does.

I dess 'ey've everyone fordot  
 'At I'm 'eir little dirl;  
 'Ey haven't changed my dress today,  
 My hair's all out of turl;  
 'Ey's tandy on my face an' hands,  
 I don't look nice at all,  
 'Ey've everyone fordotten me  
 Fer dess a nasty doll!

I wis' 'et I tould det it onct;  
 I'd frow it all about,  
 En knock it — so! En slap it — so!  
 En shake its sawdust out;  
 En 'en w'en 'ey saw how it looked  
 I dess know 'ey'd all be  
 Ez dlad ez tould be 'ess t' have  
 One little dirl — like me!



## A CHILD'S ALMANAC

**M**Y Mamma says 'at w'en it rains  
'Ey're washin' Heaven's window-panes  
An' careless angels 'ist do fill  
'Eir pails too full an' 'atway spill  
Some water down on us. 'At's w'y  
It rains some days w'en maybe I  
Would like to play. An' 'en she says  
It's 'ist 'em angels' carelessness  
'At makes 'em raindrops fall 'at way  
At picnics an' on circus day.

My Mamma says 'at w'en it snows  
'Ey're angels pickin' geese, she knows,  
An' 'stead o' usin' 'em t' stuff  
'Eir pillow cases, 'ey 'ist puff  
An' blow an' don't clear up 'eir muss  
Till all 'em feathers fall on us.  
An' she says 'ey 'ist pick 'atway  
'Cuz 'ey want geese f'r Tris'mus day,  
An' 'at's w'y 'ere's 'e mostes' snow  
Right close t' Tris'mus time, you know.

My Mamma says w'en wind 'ist roars  
An' blows, 'at's w'en 'e angels snores,  
But w'en it lightnings, she says, w'y,  
'Ey're scratchin' matches on 'e sky.

An' w'en it rumbles 'bove our heads  
'Ey're movin' furniture an' beds  
Up 'ere, an' cleanin' house an' shakes  
'Eir moth balls out an' 'at's w'at makes  
It hail. An' weather, she 'ist 'clares  
Is 'ist w'at angels does upstairs.

## THE LOSER

THE sun withheld its light that day; that  
night the stars were dim;

The portent of the earth and sky was  
ominous for him;

There was no gladness in the world; the fields held  
no delight;

The day of all his joys dissolved and melted into  
night;

He rubbed his pitching arms and felt the muscles  
rise and fall;

He wondered what the cruel fate that lost the game  
of ball;

He wandered idly by the brook, forsaken and alone,  
To be a hero nevermore, unsung, unwept, unknown.

'Twas only yesterday he was the idol of the team!

Those cheers and loud hurrahs he heard — could they  
have been a dream?

They called him Tim the Tiger then! Small boys  
by scores he saw

To bear his glove, his coat, his shoes, with gratitude  
and awe.

With joy they saw his arm laid bare — that mighty  
arm and brown

That wound itself about his head and mowed the  
batsmen down;

And when he went upon the field, the mighty cheers  
for him  
Showed how their hopes of victory were all bound up  
in Tim!

It was but yesterday he bore the laurels on his  
brow,  
But who, alas! is there so low to do him honor  
now?  
His heart swells, bursting in his chest; the heart so  
bruised and sore;  
Could he but go back on the field and pitch that  
game once more!  
The tears fall from his eyes like rain, the hot and  
angry tears,  
No sorrow has he known like this in all his fifteen  
years;  
How will he meet the Tigers now? How look into  
the eyes  
Of those who staked their all on him and saw him  
lose the prize?

To school he walks secluded ways where once with  
pride he strode,  
With awestruck youngsters all about, the middle of  
the road;  
Far from the madding crowd he stands upon the play-  
ground there  
His honors fallen like the leaves in Autumn's frosty  
air;

A humble Tiger is he now, and small boys pass him  
by  
With cruel sneers where once he heard the cheers  
ring shrill and high;  
And Reddy Blake, the Cyclone Curve, is pitcher for  
the team,  
While he's but the somnambulist of a quick-vanished  
dream!

## BACK TO SCHOOL

FELL in the creek twice yesterday!  
Slipped and slid from a load of hay,  
Stepped on a stone and bruised my toe;  
Hardly walk 'cause I'm blistered so;  
Hit my knee till it's blue and black,  
Sat in the sun and burned my back  
When I went to swim, but my, I'm glad!  
Best vacation I ever had.

Slid off the old red barn last week.  
Wind all gone so I couldn't speak  
When they laid me in upon the bed  
And put cold water on my head.  
Got poison-ivy on my legs  
When I went in the weeds to look for eggs;  
But I've had more fun since I don't know when!  
Hate to go back to school again.

Burned my hands till they're awful sore  
When the calf ran out of the big barn door  
And I tried to hold the rope and fell  
Most twenty feet down the old dry well.  
Lost my hat that was almost new,  
In the great big lake, when the high wind blew;  
And my pants are torn from many a climb,  
But I never had such a summer-time.

Ate poison berries by the creek  
Till they thought I'd die, I felt so sick;  
But they gave me ipecac to take,  
And it cured up all my stomach-ache!  
Got stung by bees, but I got stung best  
When I started home with a hornet's nest,  
And I all swelled up; but I'm gone down now,  
And it's all in a boy's life, anyhow!

Nose all peeled till it's red and rough,  
Hands all brown, but I'm awful tough  
From the exercise, and I'm big and strong,  
'Cause I hoed in a corn-field all day long.  
And my uncle said that I might stay  
For harvest-time, and he'd give me pay;  
And I'd like to stay, but I have to go  
Back home to school, 'cause my Ma said so.

## DISENCHANTMENTS

**H**ERE is the brook where the bold pirates  
ferried,  
Swashbuckling wretches, cold-blooded,  
unkind;

Here is the tree where vast treasure was buried,  
Doubloons we dug for but never could find.  
How things have changed since these waters were  
riven,  
Splashed with our paddles and churned into foam!  
Since the dark nights when the pickaxe was driven  
Where the lost treasure lay under the loam!

Here is the wood with its fastness unbounded,  
Whence the red savage stole noiselessly out,  
Warning us not till his warwhoop was sounded,  
Leaving us scalped on the greensward about.  
How things have changed from the steed and the  
stirrup,  
Flintlock and tomahawk whittled from lath,  
Where our blood ran there's no fluid but syrup  
From the sap maples along our war path!

Here is the plain where our scouts reconnoitred,  
Crawling and creeping through morass and glade,  
Sighting some bloodthirsty savage who loitered  
Near by the scene of some scalp-lifting raid.



How things have changed since the red deer went  
leaping,

Since came the bison by hundreds to browse,  
Silent the plain where our brave scouts went creep-  
ing,

Save for the lowing of far distant cows.

Here is the cave where our clans were assembled,  
Guarded by sentries, nor traitor could reach;  
Ghostly and tomb-like, where heroes dissembled  
Blood-chilling fears in their boldness of speech.

Bruce had a refuge here, Wallace lay wounded,  
Hallowed its clammy walls, safe its retreat,  
Once 'twas a labyrinth, gloomy, unsounded,  
'Tis but a gravel pit, just off the street.

How things have changed in the years since we knew  
them,

Pirate and redskin and treasure and clan;  
Men walk beside them and past them and through  
them,

Giving no heed that our blood there once ran;  
Making no sign for the struggles that swept them,  
Flintlock and scalplock, raid, warfare, and strife,  
How things have changed since we cherished and kept  
them!

All of the romance has gone out of life!

## A RAINY NIGHT

'**B**OUT eight o'clock first night that we  
Were down at the academy  
'Twas awful rainy out, and so  
We both of us stayed in, you know;  
But we could hear the wind and rain  
Come splashing on the window-pane;  
And after while, why, Henry Stout  
Put up the curtain and looked out,  
And said, "My! Ain't she coming down!  
I wish I was in Beaverstown."

And then nobody spoké at all,  
Just listened to the rain-drops fall;  
And Henry sniffled up his nose  
Because he had a cold, I s'pose.  
And then he said, "I wonder how  
Our folks are getting on by now."  
And I said, "Oh, I guess all right.  
My! Ain't it rainy out to-night!"  
And Henry gave a great big sigh  
And swallowed hard — and so did I.

And then he said, "My! Such a noise!  
I guess there's lots of homesick boys  
Around tonight." And I said, "Oh," —  
Just careless like — "Oh, I don't know."

And then he said, "I guess Jim Brown  
Is glad he stayed in Beaverstown  
And didn't have to come down here."  
And I said, "Do your eyes feel queer?  
I got a speck in mine, I guess,  
They water so." And he said, "Yes."

And then he looked and tried to smile,  
And we kept still for quite a while,  
And heard it rain; and then he said,  
"I s'pose our folks are gone to bed  
And sound asleep by now, I guess."  
And then I swallowed and said, "Yes."  
So then we both 'got into bed  
And heard it rain; and then he said,  
"My! Ain't she just a-pouring down!  
I wish I was in Beaverstown."

## KITCHEN MIRACLES

**I**N Aunt Amelia's kitchen there are many wonders  
done,  
Such miracles are wrought as never seen beneath  
the sun:

A pumpkin from the garden — just a yellow sphere  
that lies

Beneath her skilful handling ripens quickly into  
pies;

The corn grows into fritters, you must marvel at the  
change;

The apples change to dumplings in the glowing  
kitchen range;

She waves her hands above it, and the milk is cottage  
cheese.

You merely watch her, and you see such miracles as  
these.

She finds it easy, quite, to make blueberries into  
rolls;

And eggs are changed to omelets above the glowing  
coals;

And sometimes when she's fixing the materials for  
pies

She turns cider into mince-meat right before your  
very eyes!

Sometimes she makes a currant roll — you would  
not think she could —  
Or makes a peach turn over, or does something just  
as good;  
But she says quite the hardest task that ever she has  
found  
Is, when she has her boys at tea, to make these things  
go 'round!

## JIM BRADY'S BIG BROTHER

**J**IM BRADY'S big brother's a wonderful lad,  
And wonderful, wonderful muscles he had;  
He swung by one arm from the limb of a tree  
And hung there while Jim counted up forty-three  
Just as slow as he could; and he leaped at a bound  
Across a wide creek and lit square on the ground  
Just as light as a deer; and the things he can do,  
So Jimmy told us, you would hardly think true.

Jim Brady's big brother could throw a fly ball  
From center to home just like nothing at all;  
And often while playing a game he would stand  
And take a high fly with just only one hand;  
Jim Brady showed us where he knocked a home run  
And won the big game when it stood three to one  
Against the home team, and Jim Brady, he showed  
The place where it lit in the old wagon road!

Jim Brady's big brother could bat up a fly  
That you hardly could see, for it went up so high;  
He'd bring up his muscle and break any string  
That you tied on his arm like it wasn't a thing!  
He used to turn handsprings, and cart-wheels, and he  
Could jump through his hands just as slick as could  
be,  
And circuses often would want him to go  
And be in the ring, but his mother said no.

Jim Brady's big brother would often make bets  
With boys that he'd turn two complete summersets  
From off of the spring-board before he would dive,  
And you'd hardly think he would come up alive;  
And nobody ever who went there to swim  
Could do it, but it was just easy for him;  
And they'd all be scared, so Jim said, when he'd stay  
In under and come up a half mile away.

Jim Brady's big brother, so Jim said, could run  
Five miles in a race just as easy as one.  
Right often he walked on his hands half a block  
And could have walked more if he'd wanted to walk!  
And Jimmy says wait till he comes home from school,  
Where he is gone now, and some day, when it's cool,  
He'll get him to prove everything to be true  
That Jimmy told us his big brother could do!

## THE SCAPEGOAT

**I**F anybody comes in late  
To dinner and don't shut the gate,  
Or doesn't sweep the porch, or go  
Right out and shovel off the snow,  
Or bring in wood or wipe his feet,  
Or leave the woodshed nice and neat —  
It's me!

If anybody doesn't think  
To carry out the cow a drink,  
Or tracks mud on the kitchen floor,  
Or doesn't shut the cellar door,  
Or leaves the broom out on the stoop,  
Or doesn't close the chicken coop —  
It's me!

If anybody doesn't bring  
The hammer in, or breaks a thing,  
Or dulls the axe, or doesn't know  
What has become of so-and-so  
That's lost for maybe six weeks past,  
If anybody had it last —  
It's me!



If anything is lost or gone,  
They've got some one to blame it on;  
I get the blame for all the rest  
Because I am the little-est;  
And if they have to blame some one  
For what is or what isn't done —  
It's me!

## A TRAGEDY OF CENTER FIELD

**H**E muffed the fly that lost the game; he never  
did before;

The boys don't think he'll ever be light-  
hearted any more.

Our captain didn't say a word; he just picked up his  
bat

And started home with downcast head — what words  
could equal that?

Nobody spoke on our whole side, or didn't even ask  
How Stubby came to muff the fly. Bud Hicks picked  
up his mask

And sighed an awful sorry sigh. Stub Weeks is not  
the same —

Our boys don't think he ever will, because he lost  
the game.

Nobody asked him to explain. They couldn't under-  
stand

How Stubby dropped it when he had the ball right in  
his hand.

It sailed from Pudgy Williams' bat and soared just  
like a bird

To center field where Stubby was. Nobody hardly  
stirred

Because it was so critical, but Bud Hicks gave a  
shout,

A TRAGEDY OF CENTER FIELD 159

He knew a fly in center field was just as good as out  
When Stubby Weeks was under it. And then he  
gave a cry  
Of agony too great for words when Stubby muffed  
the fly.

Our boys all slowly walked away, and even Red  
Blake's team  
Were too surprised to cheer because it seemed just  
like a dream.  
And over there in center field Stub Weeks was dream-  
ing, too,  
As though he was Napoleon and this was Waterloo.  
The blow was such an awful one he acted sort of  
stunned,  
And then he walked in from the field expecting to be  
shunned  
Forevermore by all his friends. His throat was  
hoarse and dry;  
We knew his heart was broken then because he  
muffed the fly.

He saw us all pick up our things and walk away, and  
then  
The awful stain upon his name came back to him  
again.  
He thought of how it should have been — the loud  
hurrahs and cheers,  
And leaned against the back-stop fence and drenched  
it with his tears,

160 A TRAGEDY OF CENTER FIELD

Till all the boys felt sorry then, and told him not to  
mind

Because the sun was in his eyes and must have made  
him blind.

But weeks and weeks have passed since then — his  
heart is awful sore,

Our boys don't think he'll ever be light-hearted any  
more!

## IN SWIMMING

'IST boys — th' kind you used t' know,  
What-d'-y'-call-him, So-and-so  
An' What's-His-Name — an' every one  
'Ist full o' health an' out for fun.  
No meanness in a one of us,  
'Ist brown an' strong an' mischievous,  
'Cuz that's th' way 'at boys all grow —  
'Ist boys — th' kind you used t' know.

'Ist boys — th' kind you used t' be.  
What! Never climbed an apple tree  
An' shook 'em down? Why, Mister, you —  
You never was a boy, real true.  
I'll bet 'at you was mischievous  
As you could be. You're foolin' us  
'Cuz you can't help but see 'at we  
Are boys — 'ist like you used t' be.

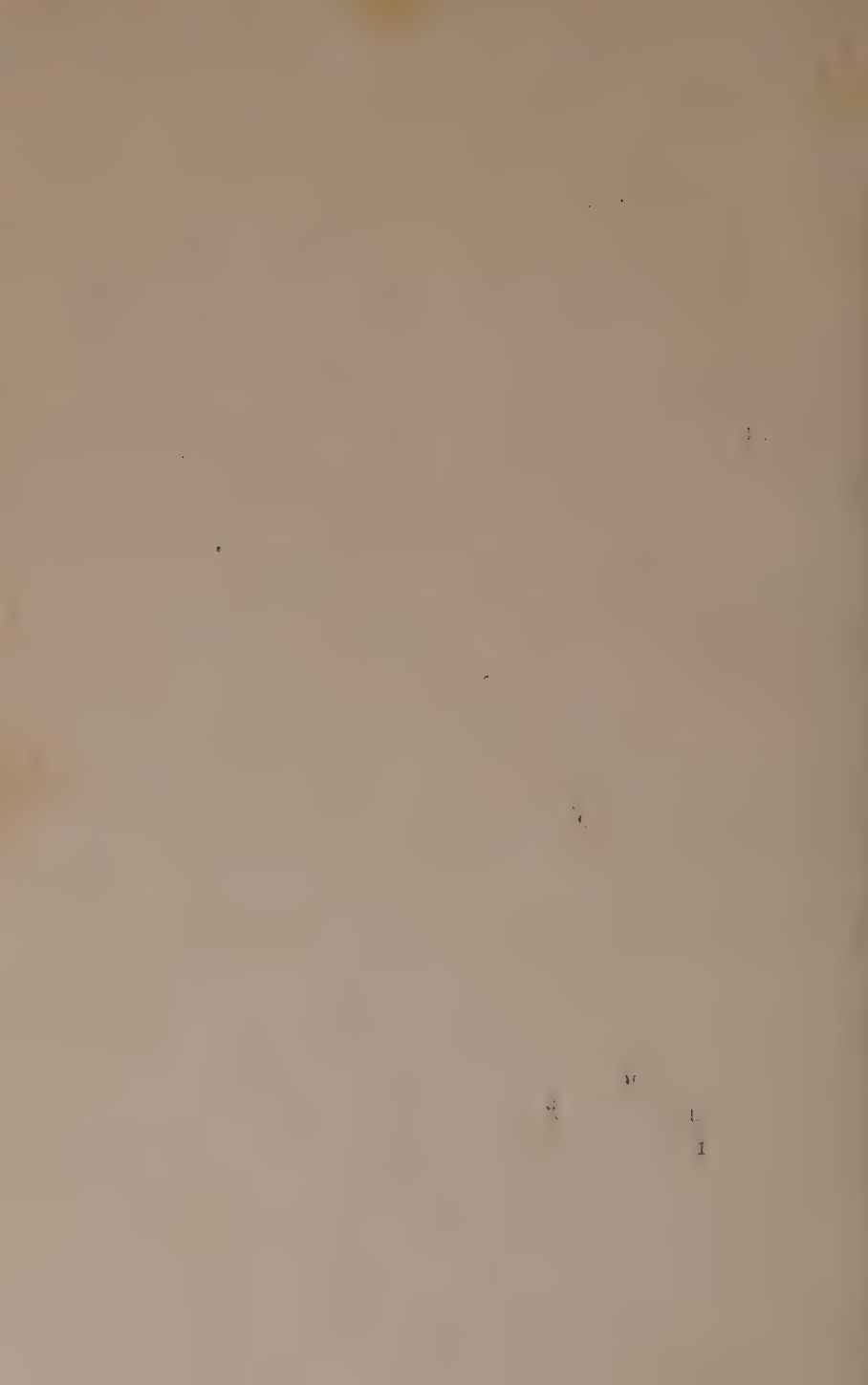
Of course we ought t' be at school,  
But my! The water's nice an' cool  
An' when it calls you, w'y, you 'ist  
Can't be a real boy an' resist.  
An' say! We caught a fish down there  
'Most two feet long — right close t' w'ere  
You're standin' now. Now don't you see  
We're boys — 'ist like you used t' be?

Say, you ain't goin' t' tell our Ma  
'At you was passin' by an' saw  
Us swimmin' here. W'y, Mister, you  
Won't never feel right if you do.  
Don't be a tattle-tale! W'y, say,  
If you should give us boys away  
You couldn't never bear to see  
A boy — 'ist like you used t' be.

Come on, now! You ain't goin' t' tell  
On us. I know it, 'ist as well  
As anythin'. You wouldn't hurt  
Her feelin's 'ist t' do us dirt.  
You won't? Thanks, Mister. You're a brick.  
We're goin' home, Sir, pretty quick.  
It's awful fine here, 'cuz, y' see,  
We're boys — 'ist like you used t' be.



IN SWIMMING





## AN UNUSUAL CHUM

**H**ENRY BLAKE'S father goes fishing with  
him,  
And goes in the creek so's to teach him to  
swim;

He talks to him just like they're awful close chums  
And sometimes at night he helps Henry do sums;  
And once he showed Henry how he used to make  
A basket by whittling a peach stone and take  
The bark off of willows for whistles although  
He hadn't made one since a long time ago.

Henry Blake's father is just like his chum,  
And when he goes fishing he lets Henry come;  
He fixes two seats on the bank of the brook  
And shows Henry how to put frogs on his hook;  
And sometimes he laughs in the jolliest way  
At some little thing that he hears Henry say,  
And dips up a drink in his hat like you do  
When only just boys go a-fishing with you.

Henry Blake's father will take him and stay  
Somewhere in the woods for a half holiday  
And wear his old clothes and bring home a big sack  
Of hick'ries and walnuts to help Henry crack;  
And sit on a dead log somewhere in the shade  
To eat big sandwiches his mother has made;  
And Henry Blake's father, he don't seem as though  
He's more than his uncle, he likes Henry so!

## AND JUST THEN

**D**ON'T you remember when the ship, the  
pirate ship, that flew  
The black flag with the gleaming skull, in  
the fierce gale that blew,  
Went on the rocks? I think it was upon the Spanish  
Main;  
The sails were torn to tatters and there fell a driving  
rain,  
The air was pierced with cries of fear, shocks followed  
upon shocks,  
"Come, man the lifeboats," called the mate, "the  
ship is on the rocks!"  
And just when lightnings rent the air and all the sky  
was red,  
Your mother said, "You've read enough, my boy!  
It's time for bed!"

Don't you remember when the score stood six to six,  
until  
The very ending of the game and every heart stood  
still?  
The Red Sox pitcher took his place, while not a  
watcher stirred,  
A hit, a pass, an error and a runner got to third.  
Don't you remember, as you read, you almost heard  
the crack

As bat met ball and you could feel cold chills go down  
your back?

And just as you had but a page to find which players  
led,

Your mother said, "You've read enough, my boy!  
It's time for bed!"

Don't you remember when Wild Bill and Deadshot  
Dick, the scout,

Were prisoned in the rocky cave with redskins all  
about,

With all their ammunition gone, nor food to eat, as  
they

Had been a thousand times before, but always got  
away?

The war-whoops rang out fierce and shrill. Said  
Dick, "I have a plan;

We will escape or sell our lives as dearly as we can."

And just as you turned o'er the page to see what  
plans they'd lay,

The clock struck nine — your mother came and took  
the book away.

Oh, Captain Kidd, it seemed to me when you went  
on the rock

You always timed the hour of it to be at nine o'clock!

And Dick, the scout, the redskins came and fell on  
you with rage

Just when my boyhood bed time came and I turned  
down the page!

And Spike, the wizard of the slab, who mowed the  
batsmen down

Like blades of grass, the hero of the little country  
town,

You seemed to time the crisis of your fiercest game,  
someway,

At nine o'clock, when Mother came and took the  
book away!

## AFTERWARD

I'M glad I was always so good to her;  
I was just up there in the nursery  
Picking up things — you know — that were  
Left strewn about as carelessly  
As a child will do when she's called from play;  
I picked them up with a mist and blur  
In my eyes, and I laid them all away —  
I'm glad I was always so good to her.

And many's the picture that came to me,  
That came to me o'er a Teddy bear  
Or a doll or a whole tin infantry  
Arrayed in a battle column there;  
Picture on picture of girls and girls  
(One year and two years and three) that were;  
Of pinafores and blue frocks and curls —  
I'm glad I was always so good to her.

Dreams on dreams and they ride me down,  
Column and phalanx, and voices call;  
And grasses grow green and come sere and brown,  
And leaves bud, blossom and blow and fall;  
She had been six now — and seven — and ten —  
So tall — and so tall — how fair they were,  
How fair they were and they would have been,  
Those lost ones — I'm glad I was good to her.

## CIRCUS DAY

**I**F you're waking call me early, call me early,  
Mother dear.

I think at 4 o'clock A.M., the circus will be here;  
If it was any other day 'twould take an awful shock  
To rouse me from my little bed before quite 8 o'clock;  
You needn't mind my breakfast, for I'll be in dreadful haste,

And if I see the cars unload I'll have no time to waste;  
Perhaps they'll wash the cages, Ma, and I'll be there  
to see

The men take off the sideboards from the whole  
menagerie.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, Mother  
dear,

Because the place where it unloads is full two miles  
from here;

I'd faint without my breakfast if 'twas any other day,  
But I'll be strong enough, I think, to run quite all the  
way;

The boys I know will all be there; 'twill be a wondrous sight

To see the elephants led out before it's hardly light;  
And hear the lions roar, which makes goose pimples  
when you hear —

If you're waking, call me early, call me early, Mother  
dear.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, Mother  
dear,

No matter if you whisper it I'll be quite sure to hear;  
If I was being waked to turn the wringer it would be  
A good deal harder job, of course, for you to waken  
me;

But I will leave my stockings on and put my shirt in  
place,

And if I'm rushed for time I will not need to wash  
my face;

And in the early morning light you'll see me leaving  
here

About three minutes after four, so call me, Mother  
dear.

If you're waking, call me early, call me early, Mother  
dear;

I will not yawn and rub my eyes and ask if morning's  
here;

I will not pull the covers up as I have done before  
And ask you if I cannot sleep just half an hour more;  
I'll jump right out of bed as soon as ever you may call  
And be all dressed and down the stair and gone out  
through the hall

Before you say Jack Robinson — the circus will be  
here

At 4 o'clock, so call me early, early, Mother dear!

## THE TOUR OF A SMILE

**M**Y papa smiled this morning when  
He came down stairs, you see,  
At Mamma; and when he smiled, then  
She turned and smiled at me;  
And when she smiled at me, I went  
And smiled at Mary Ann,  
Out in the kitchen and she lent  
It to the hired man.

So then he smiled at someone, who  
He saw, when going by;  
Who also smiled and ere he knew  
Had twinkles in his éye;  
So he went to his office then  
And smiled right at his clerk,  
Who put some more ink on his pen  
And smiled back from his work.

So when his clerk went home he smiled  
Right at his wife, and she  
Smiled over at their little child  
As happy as could be;  
And then their little child, she took  
The smile to school, and when  
She smiled at teacher from her book,  
Teacher smiled back again.



And then the teacher passed on one  
To little James McBride,  
Who couldn't get his lessons done,  
No matter how he tried;  
And Jamesy took it home and told  
How teacher smiled at him  
When he was tired and didn't scold,  
But said, "Don't worry, Jim!"

And when I happened to be there  
That very night to play,  
His mother had a smile to spare  
Which came across my way;  
And then I took it after while  
Back home, and Mamma said:  
"Here is that very self-same smile  
Come back with us to bed!"

## WHEN GRANDPA PLAYS

I DON'T know what makes Grandpa tired; he's  
hardly done a thing  
Except to put some hammocks up and help us  
children swing;

He only came an hour ago, and we've been here all  
day.

He says we're most too much for him and thinks he'll  
hardly stay;

He just played drop-the-handkerchief and blind  
man's buff, but he

Says, My! we've got him out of breath and tired as  
he can be.

He says it's most too much for him to play leap-frog  
and ball,

But we have been here all day long, and we're not  
tired at all!

He started to play hide and seek, and first he had to  
blind

And then he ran with all his might to see who he  
could find,

And Tommy Watkins beat him in from there behind  
a tree,

Till Grandpa had to give it up and say, "All's out's  
in free!"

And then he sat down on a stump and said he's tired  
to death.

He had to hold his sides a while till he could catch  
his breath.

He said he'd like to shake a tree and make some  
apples fall,

But he's too tired, and we boys here are hardly tired  
at all!

He only ran in under once when we were in the swing,  
And then he had to rest because he's tired as every-  
thing;

And once he showed us how to climb a great, tall  
tree, but when

He only got a few feet up he slid right down again.

He said he used to climb a tree, oh, very, very tall

And sit across a branch way up and never tire at all,

But now he's out of practice, and his legs won't stay  
around

The trunk, and he feels safer when he stays down on  
the ground!

And sometimes when he goes back home and holds  
us by the hand,

All wringing wet and out of breath, our Ma says  
"Goodness, Land!

I think you are the youngest boy of all the boys in  
sight."

But Grandpa rubs his legs and arms and limps and  
says "Not quite!"

And sometimes in the parlor, why, he says he was  
so strong

When he was just a boy they used to take him right  
along

To lift the heavy things and do the hardest work, you  
know,

But now us boys 'll tire him out in just an hour or so!

## THE PARTED WAYS

I USED to know a little lad,  
A youngster of thirteen,  
Who wasn't very good or bad,  
But somewhere in between.  
He had such freckles on his nose  
As your nose seems to bear;  
Indeed, I'd almost think that those  
Were some he used to wear.

He used to have an old straw hat  
All frazzled at the brim,  
Indeed, I'd almost think that that  
Came down to you from him.  
And he had such a dog as now  
Barks joyfully along  
With you — it makes me wonder how  
It could have lived so long.

And in his heart he held such song  
As fell upon my ear,  
And echoed through the shadows long  
When you came whistling near;  
So when at twilight, dawn or noon  
This overture you bring,  
It seems to be the very tune  
This other lad would sing.

## THE PARTED WAYS

And he had pockets bulged with things  
By which he set much store,  
With knives and marbles, tops and strings  
And half a hundred more;  
I see your pockets emptied now,  
Your things cast up with care,  
Until they seem to be, somehow,  
His treasures you have there.

I know not where it was or when,  
But with his heart of song  
He went and came not back again,  
And took his dreams along;  
So some day in a little while  
He'll wave a sun-browned hand.  
And leave you with his cheery smile —  
And you will understand.



THE PARTED WAYS





## A MESSAGE HOME

SAY, Little Boy, 'twixt dawn and dusk who  
treads such devious ways,  
I wish you would remember me to all your  
sunny days;  
For once they were such friends of mine; so bid them  
my good cheer  
And say you saw an old, old friend, who holds them  
very dear;  
Remember me to those cool paths, that led by fields  
and streams,  
Where what were my songs now are yours and what  
were mine your dreams;  
Just say you saw an old, old friend, who wanted you  
to tell  
Them all he sent them love and cheer and wished  
them always well.

And, Little Boy, if you should lie beneath some  
spreading tree,  
Be good enough to say it has remembrance sweet  
from me;  
For once it used to cover me with shade so thick and  
cool  
And bid me lie and rest and dream as I came home  
from school;

And when you romp with comrade boys at noontime,  
Lad, I pray,  
Remember me to all of them and to the games they  
play;  
And let no games too humble be, no youngsters be  
too small  
To know an old, old friend sends love and blessings  
to them all.

Remember me to all your dreams, to rose and bush  
and stem,  
To days too short to hold your joys, remember me  
to them;  
To all your secrets deep and vast, of things that are  
and were  
And are to be, half-whispered in the twilight's dusk  
and blur;  
Just say an old friend, long away, but still remember-  
ing  
Would have them know his heart is full of memories  
that bring  
Delight to bygone fellowships, and he would have  
you tell  
Them all he sends them love and cheer, and wishes  
them so well!

For, over land and over sea the hearts of us that  
fare  
Swell with the messages they bid the homebound  
comrade bear;

And over days and over years have I fared forth and  
so

I bid you bear my greetings, Lad, to all the joys you  
know.

Remember me to all the hearts and hopes and dreams  
and deeds,

Bear blessings of mine everywhere the path of boy-  
land leads;

Just say you saw an old, old friend, who wanted you  
to tell

The joys and boys of youth he loved and wished them  
always well.

## LULLABY

**S**LEEPY little, creepy little goblins in the gloam-  
ing  
With their airy little, fairy little faces all aglow,  
Winking little, blinking little brownies gone a-roam-  
ing  
Hear their rustling little, bustling little footfalls as  
they go;  
Laughing little, chaffing little voices sweetly sing-  
ing  
In the dearest little, queerest little baby lullabies,  
Creep, creep, creep!  
Time to go to sleep!  
Baby playing 'possum with his big, brown eyes!

Cricket in the thicket with the oddest little chatter  
Sings his prattling little, rattling little, tattling little  
tune,  
Fleet the feet of tiny stars go patter, patter, patter,  
As they scamper from the heavens at the rising of  
the moon;  
Beaming little, gleaming little fire flies go dreaming  
To the dearest little, queerest little baby lullabies,  
Creep, creep, creep!  
Time to go to sleep!  
Baby playing 'possum with his big, brown eyes!



LULLABY



Quaking little, shaking little voices all a-quiver  
In the mushy little, rushy little, reedy, weedy bogs,  
Droning little, moaning little chorus by the river  
In the joking little, croaking little cadence of the  
    frogs,  
Eerie little, cheery little glowworms in the gloaming  
Where the clover heads like fairy little night caps rise,  
    Creep, creep, creep!  
    Time to go to sleep!  
Baby playing 'possum with his big, brown eyes!

## DISGUIISING TOIL

**W**HEN I was just a little boy and sent to  
cut the weeds,  
I played myself a hero bold and given to  
mighty deeds;  
I played myself an armored knight, my scythe a  
broadsword keen,  
The weeds an army of my foes come marching o'er  
the green;  
I laid my good broadsword about, they broke and  
ran pell-mell,  
At every stroke some stubborn lout and his retainers  
fell.  
And when I told them of my play, with lusty shouts  
and glee,  
The neighbor boys brought scythes and fell to cut-  
ting weeds for me.

When I was just a little boy and sent to cut the wood,  
I played myself a frontier scout, six feet in buckskin  
stood;  
I played the red men swarmed about and all the tim-  
bers laid  
Must be quick hewed and fashioned for an old fron-  
tier stockade;  
Quick fell my axe with flashing blade, for all about  
I heard



The war-whoop of the warriors who in the thicket  
stirred.

And when I told them of my play, with lusty strokes  
and cry,

The neighbor boys fell to and wrought my woodpile  
brimming high.

When I was just a little boy and sent to scrub the  
walk

With hose and broom, I used to play it was the good  
ship Hawk

Or Hornet, Spider or Whatnot, afire far out at sea,  
Nor help at hand where'er I looked, to windward or  
to lee;

And how I fought the tongues of flame that swept by  
stern and bow!

The clouds of smoke that rolled above — I almost see  
them now!

And when I told them of my play, with many a lusty  
shout,

The neighbor boys plied hose and broom to put the  
fire out.

And when I had to shovel snow I led some hardy  
band

Of undismayed discoverers, in far-off Arctic land;  
With stores and goods and blubber, too, all buried  
deep below

The mark that I had left beneath some good six feet  
of snow;

And almost famished, there I dug, full knowing I  
should find

At last the goodly stores of stuff that we had left  
behind.

And when I told them of my play, with many a lusty  
shout,

The neighbor boys plied willing spades and helped  
me dig them out.

## LITTLE GIRL WITH THE CURLS

**L**ITTLE girl with the curls, and the passion-  
less eyes,  
With your heart that is pure as the cool  
springs that rise  
In the green of the hills, and with cheeks that are fair  
And unsoiled of the world as the snowflake in air,  
With your dreams that are sweet and that always  
come true,  
Little girl with the curls, here's a blessing for you.

Little girl with the curls and with grace that is sweet  
From the toss of your head to your fast-flying feet,  
With the light in your eyes that is brimming with  
truth  
And the straightforward gaze that's the glory of  
youth,  
With your smiles that are glad and your days that  
are fair,  
Here's a blessing as rich as the gold of your hair.

Little girl with the curls and the kisses as light  
As the butterfly's kiss of the flower in its flight,  
With your heart all atune to the beauties you see,  
With the song of your days sweet as music can be,  
With your peace like the pardon of heaven unfurls,  
Here's a blessing for you, little girl with the curls.

186 LITTLE GIRL WITH THE CURLS

And Oh, be the days of thy trial as far  
From the deeps of the sea as the snowy peaks are!  
And Oh, be thy heart in its singing atune,  
Thy skies be but blue with the splendors of June.  
So bless thee and keep thee and spare thee — with  
    pearls  
Be thy days strung through life, little girl with the  
    curls.

## MY WONDERFUL DAD

**M**Y Daddy, he lived in a wonderful house,  
and he played with such wonderful  
boys;

They were neighbors of his; and the attic they had  
was a storehouse of wonderful toys;

He slept every night in a wonderful bed, with a tick  
that his grandmother made

From the feathers of geese that she picked all her-  
self, and so soft he was almost afraid

He would sink out of sight when he got into bed; he  
could look from his window right out

And see where the vines used to bring him sweet  
flowers just by crawling along up the spout;

And he could look over and see where the woods and  
the squirrels and birds used to be.

He must have had wonderful times where he lived  
from the way that he tells them to me!

My Daddy, he caught the most wonderful fish —  
there were thin ones and fat ones and round,

And some were so long that their tails when he walked  
would be dragging right down on the ground;

He scraped off their scales on a log that he had at the  
woodpile, and said he would know

That log just as well if he saw it today, although that  
was a long time ago.

He used to dig worms of a wonderful size — he has  
never seen any like those  
Since he was grown up; and on Saturdays he wore  
a wonderful old suit of clothes  
And a hat that an uncle of his had forgot, for on Fri-  
day he did all his sums,  
And Saturday always he went off somewhere with  
his one or two wonderful chums.

My Daddy, he lived in a wonderful place when he  
was a twelve-year-old lad,  
For no matter what kind of a day it might be there  
was always some fun to be had.  
He learned how to swim in a wonderful creek, where  
all of the whole summer long  
The water was warm, and the springboard they had  
it was springy and slippery and strong.  
And on the way home they found berries to eat, and  
he said he remembers them well,  
And it didn't seem nearly a mile to back home, for  
there always was something to tell  
That took up the time both for him and his chums,  
and sometimes they came home a new way,  
And always all summer they had it all planned what  
to do on the next Saturday.

My Daddy, he said he could go back there now and  
could take me as straight as a string  
To all of the wonderful places he knew — where the  
first flowers came in the spring;

Where you almost were sure to catch fish in the brook  
— where the nuts would come dropping in fall;  
Where the most berries were on the way to back home  
— he is sure he remembers them all.  
He knows where the squirrels were most apt to be,  
and the lane where the hay wagon comes;  
And said he'd find names in the bark of a tree that  
were cut there by him and his chums  
Twenty-five years ago, and the log where they sat  
when they found the big garter-snake curled.  
My Daddy, he must have had wonderful times in  
the splndidest place in the world!

## REMEMBRANCES, BILL

I WONDER if you still remember them, Bill,  
The fresh morning glories that crept up the sill  
And nodded at us when the night time was gone  
And curtains thrown open to let in the dawn;  
The light over there, and the edge of the sun  
That blazed on the hill when the day was begun,  
The air on our cheeks and the sparkle of dew,  
Our hearts and our hopes like the day that was  
new.

I wonder if you still remember them, Bill,  
The way of a thousand delights up the hill,  
Through lanes and by hedges, where orchards were  
sweet,  
And clover dews healing the woes of bare feet;  
The chatter of squirrels, the rattle of leaves,  
The round, yellow pumpkins, the wind-tattered  
sheaves,  
The shade that was deep and lent splendor to dreams  
And lips that were laved by the bubbles of streams.

I wonder if you still remember them, Bill,  
The times when the cup of all nature would spill  
Its gladness for us, when the days overflowed  
With the laughter of playtime, and far down the  
road



Were milestones all marked by delights jointly  
shared,  
To set off the days where adventure's steps fared;  
Nor ever a secret but innocence knew,  
The heart of youth hallowed and joy bubbled  
through.

I wonder if you still remember them, Bill,  
The times in the twilight, on hedgerow and hill  
When we whistled homeward, upon the old road  
With hearts full of gladness that quite overflowed;  
The pillows where nestled two tangles of hair,  
The joy-freighted dreams, with a left-over share  
For the dawn of the morrow — a thread that was  
pearled  
With jewels of joy that were strung 'round our world.

I wonder if you still remember them, Bill,  
Our vows to the future we thought to fulfill;  
Our day dreams to cherish, our faith to endure,  
Through trials how bitter our hearts to keep pure;  
No gladness of living but we two would share —  
The lanes and the byways are wondrously fair,  
But somehow the voices grow tuneless and still —  
I wonder if you still remember them, Bill.

## THE BEREAVEMENT

**W**E'RE all alone, 'ist Pop an' me,  
'Cuz Mamma's gone away somew'eres  
T' stay the longest time; an' we  
Are all alone; an' Pop 'ist stares  
A-past me an' he never hears  
Me when I ast w'ere she could be,  
An' both his eyes are full o' tears  
W'en we're alone, 'ist Pop an' me.

An' after w'ile I ast him w'y  
She don't come back; but he don't know;  
An' 'en some way he starts t' cry  
Till I say, "Please, Pop, don't cry so."  
An' put my arms part way around  
His neck an' hug him, 'ist cuz we  
Are lonesome; he don't make a sound;  
An' we're alone, 'ist Pop an' me.

An' he 'ist hugs me up so tight  
An' sez my Mamma's gone so fur  
She won't come back, but sez we might  
'Ist some day, maybe, go to her.  
An' I ast w'y can't we go now  
'Cuz we're so lonesome here; but he  
Don't seem to hear me ast, somehow,  
An' we're alone, 'ist Pop an' me.

An' 'en I 'ist fergit she's gone  
An' think it's almos' time fur her  
T' come an' put th' supper on,  
But w'en Pop's eyes are all a blur  
I 'member 'at's she's gone away,  
An' can't git supper; Pop sez he  
Ain't hungry, an' I ain't, I say;  
An' we're alone, 'ist Pop an' me.

An' 'en Pop rocks me in his lap  
An' rubs my head, 'ist soft an' kind,  
An' asts me if I'll take a nap  
If he pulls down th' parlor blind.  
An' in a little w'ile I fall  
Asleep an' he 'ist rocks; but he  
Don't never go t' sleep at all,  
An' we're alone, 'ist Pop an' me.

## IN CHILDHOOD TIME

**H**ARK! I hear the happy laughter that from  
children's voices rings,  
Swelling out like some vast golden harp  
with half a thousand strings,  
Every one vibrating grandly in an ecstatic acclaim,  
In a medley of sweet melodies that set the birds to  
shame;  
On the harp of childhood's happiness each note rings  
clear and true,  
For the heart is pure and perfect and each quivering  
string is new,  
And it tells and swells like bells afar that ring and  
rhyme and chime  
The sweetest music ever told in note or tune or time.

When the heart is growing older and the harp of  
laughter rings,  
There's a false note clashing somewhere in the swell-  
ing of the strings;  
There's a chord that strikes imperfect, where some  
sorrow echoes through  
The melody, and grief has warped the strings to  
strains not true.  
Sometimes there's brilliant music that rings from an  
empty heart,  
But it's not the melodious laughter of the child, that  
knows no art,

But just flows full and free, for Nature's teachings,  
undefiled,  
Make music that is heart-true in the sweet voice of  
a child.

Could I gather every note that floats and rings and  
swells and tells  
The gladness of the child's heart, true as any chime  
of bells  
May tell the passing hour, and fashion them into a  
song,  
'Twould thrill and fill the air with melody as though  
a throng  
Of seraphim, as tinkling cymbals struck the twin-  
kling stars  
In heaven's perfect music, where no din or discord  
mars,  
And a myriad strings would mingle in a melody sub-  
lime,  
The rhyme and chime of laughter gathered from all  
Childhood's Time.

## DON'T

**A** HUNDRED times a day I hear  
His mother say: "Don't do that, dear!"  
From early morn till dusk 'tis all  
"Don't do that, dear!" I hear her call  
From the back porch and front and side  
As though some evil would betide  
Unless she drummed it in his ear:  
"Don't do that, dear! Don't do that, dear!"

If he goes out and slams the door;  
"Don't do that, dear!" and if the floor  
Is newly scrubbed and he comes near;  
"Don't do that, dear!" is all I hear.  
If he comes romping down the stairs;  
"Don't do that, dear!" and if he wears  
No coat, but hangs it somewhere near,  
She sees and says: "Don't do that, dear!"

If he goes shinning up a tree:  
"Don't do that, dear!" If he should be  
Astride a roof I know I'll hear  
Her call to him: "Don't do that, dear!"  
His life is all "Don't this," "Don't that,"  
"Don't loose the dog," "Don't chase the cat,"  
"Don't go," "Don't stay," "Don't there," "Don't  
here,"  
"Don't do that, dear!" "Don't do that, dear!"

Sometimes he seems to me as still  
As any mouse until a shrill  
"Don't do that, dear!" falls on the air  
And drives him swift away from there.  
So when he finds another spot:  
"Don't do that, dear!" and he says: "What?"  
And she replies and cannot say —  
But — "Well, don't do it, anyway!"

## EXTINGUISHED

“THE boy stood on the burning deck, whence  
all but him had fled” —

When Tommy Gibbs stood up to speak  
he had it in his head,  
But when he saw the schoolroom full of visitors, he  
knew,  
From his weak knees and parching tongue, the words  
had all fled, too.

“The boy stood on the burning deck” — a second  
time he tried,

But he forgot about the boy, or if he lived or died;  
He only knew the burning deck was something nice  
and cool

Beside the rostrum where he stood that awful day  
in school.

“The boy stood on the burning deck” — he felt the  
flames and smoke.

His tongue was thick, his mouth was dry, he felt that  
he would choke.

And from the far back seats he heard a whisper run  
about:

“Come back here, Tom, and take your seat. They’ve  
put the fire out!”



## THE UNCHEERED HERO

**T**IM BROOKS he studies awful hard  
And faithful all the year,  
But goes out in the school house yard  
And never gets a cheer;  
And Billy Gibbs, he shirks and frets —  
He hates to work at all —  
But you should hear the cheer he gets  
Because he hits the ball.

Tim Brooks he always leads his class  
And gets his lessons done;  
But Billy Gibbs lets hours pass  
Just thinking up some fun;  
But no one cheers and throws his hat  
And says: "Hurrah for Tim!"  
But when Bill Gibbs goes up to bat  
The boys all cheer for him.

Bill Gibbs he suffers awful pain  
When he comes to recite;  
He cannot do his sums again  
Or get his grammar right;  
Then teacher calls on Timmy Brooks  
And points to him with pride,  
But when we play a game she looks  
And cheers for Bill outside.

## THE UNCHEERED HERO

Sometimes Tim Brooks he sees the game  
And watches Bill at bat,  
He gets excited just the same  
And cheers and throws his hat;  
But when he has his sums in school  
And Bill is watching him,  
Bill quite forgets the Golden Rule  
And never cheers for Tim.

I guess I'd rather be like Tim  
Than Billy Gibbs, but when  
The boys outside are cheering him  
It sounds quite pleasant then;  
And it must sometimes seem quite hard  
To study all the year,  
And go out in the school house yard  
But never get a cheer!

## OLD HALLOWE'EN FRIENDS

O HO! Mr. Ghost, with your raiment of white,  
Come to frighten me out of my wits in the  
night!

With your eyes flaming forth like two coals and your  
breath

Bearing fire that would scare a poor mortal to death;  
With your rows of great teeth grinning widely at me  
And your loose-hanging gown flapping under the tree  
In the orchard out there — Oh! I know how you're  
made,

And the youngsters who made you, so I'm not afraid.

Oho! Mr. Ghost, I am waiting for you;  
You're an old friend of mine, both trustworthy and  
true;

For that big head of yours that near gave me a fright  
Was in somebody's pumpkin patch only last night.

And out of my window not two hours ago  
I saw your head scooped out by Bill, Jack, and Joe;  
And I saw you stuck up on the end of a lath  
Before you were stationed right here in my path.

Oho! Mr. Ghost, with your garments so fine!  
I know what became of that sheet on the line  
In the neighbor's back yard, newly washed and alone.  
It is hiding that lath that you use for backbone.

And the candle that burned in the kitchen last night  
Lights those cavernous eyes that near gave me a  
fright;

Indeed, you are made from such odds and such ends  
That I feel we're the warmest of very old friends.

And those sepulchral groans you are making at me,  
I know whence they come — from that big apple tree  
That is right behind you — I have heard them before;  
They were begging for cake at the side kitchen door.  
So you see, Mr. Ghost, with your pumpkin and lath,  
With your candle and sheet, when I came up the path  
I heard a boy chuckle up there in the tree,  
And that is the reason you can't frighten me!

## A REFUGE IN DISTRESS

**A** FELLOW'S father knows a lot  
Of office work and such,  
But when it comes to things like what  
A boy wants, he ain't much.  
For when it comes to cuts or warts  
Or stone bruise on your toes,  
A fellow's father don't know, but  
A fellow's mother knows.

A fellow's father he looks wise  
And says: "A-hem! A-hem!"  
But when it comes to cakes and pies,  
What does he know of them?  
He knows the price of wheat and rye  
And corn and oats, it's true,  
But if you get the leg ache, why,  
He don't know what to do.

And if you burned your back the time  
That you went in to swim,  
And want some stuff to heal it, why,  
You never go to him,  
Because he doesn't know a thing  
About such things as those,  
But you just bet, and don't forget,  
A fellow's mother knows.

## A REFUGE IN DISTRESS

And if your nose is sunburned, till  
It's all peeled off, and you  
Go to him for some healin' stuff,  
He don't know what to do.  
He's just as helpless as can be,  
But when a fellow goes  
And asks his mother, why, you see,  
A fellow's mother knows.

A fellow's father knows a lot,  
But it ain't any use,  
So if a fellow's really got  
The leg ache or a bruise,  
Or if there's anything he wants  
He gets right up and goes  
And asks his mother, for, you see,  
A fellow's mother knows.

## THE LOST HEART

**B**ACK among the trees and trellises, along the  
leaf-strewn lane,  
Sitting on the bank of the mill stream and  
dreaming dreams again,  
Drinking water sweet as nectar from the bucket at  
the well,  
In the orchard's leaf and silence, watching windfalls  
as they fell,  
Trying here, at five and thirty, just to be a boy again,  
To recall the joys of boyhood and forget the cares of  
men;  
But I listen to a lesson in the twitter of the wren:  
When the boy's heart turns to man's it never throbs  
the same again.

Once the sun marks noon of lifetime, once the morn-  
ing steals away,  
Once the shadows growing shorter and then fall the  
other way,  
Once the play time ends at manhood, once the frolicking is done,  
Once the face is turned from dawning to the setting  
of the sun,  
You may sit among the flowers that you plucked and  
threw away,  
Turn the leaves of Time all backward, try to read  
them as you may,

You may kindle fires of Memory, you may sit and  
watch the flame,  
But there's something changed within you that can  
never be the same.

You may lay aside the burden of your troubles as you  
will,  
But the bent and sunken shoulders tell the story to  
you still;  
The story of the troubles and the trials that are  
sealed  
From the simple hearts of children, and to men alone  
revealed.  
The sorrow dulls, the sigh is stilled, the sore hearts  
soothed are,  
The smarting wound is healed again, but always  
leaves a scar,  
The fire of youth burns only once, and dies in its  
dead flame,  
The simple heart of boyhood that can never be the  
same.

So I sit among the trellises and trees and wonder  
why:  
Clear the air as in my boyhood and as blue the un-  
flecked sky,  
Full the leaves as ever blowing, sweet the bird songs  
and as free,  
But the boy's heart that throbbed to them is un-  
tuned and dead in me.



There's a longing, longing, longing, speaking in a  
    deep-drawn sigh,  
For the heart that throbbed in boyhood, cloudless  
    as the azure sky;  
For the heart that was the sunlight and the air —  
    that tongue nor pen  
Can ever paint or picture — that I cannot know  
    again.

## VERSES OF A LITTLE CHILD

**N**EVER a care as she lies asleep,  
    Dear little lassie with red-brown hair;  
    Angels of Light a sweet vigil keep,  
    Keep for the little one slumbering there.  
Never a dream as she lies so still,  
    Never a dream but of Fairyland,  
Fairyland and the flowers that fill  
    Her bed, and the lilies within her hand.

Never a tear as she lies at rest,  
    Now or ever or evermore;  
Never a sorrow to bruise her breast,  
    Ever the gladness of fairylore.  
Never the rough way to bruise her feet,  
    Never or ever a discord sound,  
Only the murmur of music sweet,  
    And the laughing of Cherubim, all around.

Never a sigh from the silent lips,  
    For the dollies all carefully laid away;  
Only the music of laughter slips  
    Out of the realm of the sunlit day.  
Never or ever a thought or care,  
    For the little hat with its flowered wreath,  
Bearing a vision of red-brown hair  
    Flying in tangled curls beneath.



VERSES OF A LITTLE CHILD



Dead? Ah, no! She is just asleep,  
 Asleep where the dreams and daisies are;  
 Angels of Light a sweet vigil keep,  
 Keep in the light of a twinkling star.  
 Asleep, and the odors of flowers fill  
 Her bed, and the lilies within her hand;  
 Asleep, and the whispering angels still  
 Her sighs with the dreams of Fairyland.

## GOLDEN DAYS IN SLOWVILLE

**T**HESE are golden days in Slowville; there is  
gladness up and down;  
For they're sticking circus posters 'round  
the little country town.

Flaming sheets of red and yellow on its every barn  
and fence

Tell of wonders aggregated disregardful of expense.

Tell of wildernesses threaded for the fierce Bigrig-  
majig;

Tell of jungle-beasts made captive and of marvels  
small and big,

"In a most stupendous spectacle of splendor and  
renown,"

Say the flaming circus posters in the little country  
town.

They have wielded monster brushes from the dewy  
hours of morn,

They have covered half of Jones's barn with grandeur  
heaven-born;

They have pictured fluffy ladies on the backs of  
dashing steeds,

They have ornamented Slowville with a wealth of  
daring deeds;

They have left a Ripperumptus on the back of Rob-  
bin's fence,

Captured in the wilds of Africa at marvelous expense;

They've a retinue of big-eyed lads as they move up  
and down

When they put up circus posters in the little country  
town.

Oh! the multicolored marvels done in wonder-rous-  
ing haste

With a broad red barn for background and no means  
but brush and paste.

"Hi, there, Jimmy! See the monkeys!" All the air  
is shrill with cries

As the likenesses of wild beasts are upreared in gor-  
geous dyes;

There's the fierce Ornithorinktus and the dreadful  
Whatisnot,

The blood-sweating Crinklwoozum and the awful  
Bingleswat.

Tent and sideshow, flag and streamer, elephant,  
parade, and clown —

Oh! they're sticking circus posters 'round the little  
country town.

These are sleepless nights in Slowville; sleepless  
nights and anxious days;

There's a hoarding of stray pennies got in half a  
hundred ways;

There are lads in wonder raptured; open-mouthed,  
with bulging eyes,

Where the marvelous menageries from gorgeous post-  
ers rise;

212    GOLDEN DAYS IN SLOWVILLE

Oh! there's glory, glory, glory in the chariots  
arrayed,

There's rapture in the promise of the splendorous  
parade;

And new life has come to Slowville and is surging up  
and down

Since they put up circus posters in the little country  
town.



## THE HEART OF A CHILD

**G**IVE me thy happy heart, Oh little child!  
Where love springs like the sweetest flower,  
wild,  
From all its virgin soil, and radiantly  
Reflects its fresh, unsullied purity.

Give me thy heart, that knows not heat or hate,  
Nor passion thrills, nor grief makes desolate,  
When love, lone, reigned, and Life but smiled and  
smiled,  
Give me thy spotless heart, Oh little child!

Give me thine artless tongue that to deceive  
Knows not; but lisps to laugh and wakes to weave  
In whispered words diviner melody  
Of love than speaks in grandest symphony.

Give me thine eyes that see but happiness,  
Nor aught of else in all the hours that bless  
Thy childhood time, nor any graver ray  
Than the glad sunshine of an endless day.

Would we could cleanse our hearts and make them  
young,  
As when were sweeter chimes of childhood rung  
From them, and when were flowers springing wild  
From the untrampled soil, Oh little child!

## THE STRENUOUS LIFE

**T**HAT is your father, dear  
Just going out the door;  
Oh, he's been living here  
For seven years or more!  
In business he's so deep  
He has no time to fret  
With little girls, but keep  
Up hope — we'll meet him yet!

That is your mother, dear,  
Just getting in the car,  
She knows that you are here  
And also who you are!  
But what with clubs to meet  
And bridge to play, you see,  
With hours so short and fleet  
She's turned you o'er to me.

But there, my dear, don't fret,  
Or let those blue eyes blur,  
Some time I know you'll get  
Acquainted, too, with her.  
Why, sometimes, in the night  
When angels vigil keep,  
She asks if you're all right  
And when you went to sleep!

I think you'd like them both,  
I think they'd both like you,  
But what with "higher growth"  
And many things to do  
They're simply rushed to death,  
But there, my dear, don't cry,  
If they should stop for breath  
We'll meet them bye and bye.

## A SONG OF MOTHERHOOD

**S**EW, sew, sew! For there's many a rent to mend;

There's a stitch to take and a dress to make,  
For where do her labors end?

Sew, sew, sew! For a rent in a dress she spies,  
Then it's needle and thread and an aching head  
And see how the needle flies!

Brush, brush, brush! For there's many a boy to clean,

And start to school with a slate and rule,  
With a breakfast to get between.  
Comb, comb, comb! In the minute she has to spare,  
For what is so wild — unreconciled  
As the wastes of a youngster's hair?

Sweep, sweep, sweep! Oh, follow the flashing broom,  
And with towel bound her forehead round  
She goes from room to room.

Dust, dust, dust! As down on her knees she kneels,  
For there's much to do in the hour or two  
Of interval 'twixt meals.

Bake, bake, bake! For the cookie jar piled high  
But yesterday in some curious way  
Is empty again, Oh my!

Stir, stir, stir, in the froth of yellow and white,  
For well she knows how the story goes  
Of a small boy's appetite.

Scrub, scrub, scrub! For the floor that was spick  
and span,

Alas, alack! has a muddy track  
Where some thoughtless youngster ran.  
Splash, splash, splash! For the dishes of thrice a day  
Are piled up high to wash and dry  
And put on the shelves away.

Patch, patch, patch! And oh for a pantaloons  
That would not tear or rip or wear  
In the course of an afternoon!  
Patch, patch, patch! And see how the needle flies,  
For a mother knows how the fabric goes  
Where the seat of trouble lies.

Toil, toil, toil! For when do her labors end,  
With a dress to make and a cake to bake  
And dresses and hose to mend?  
Stew, stew, stew! Fret and worry and fuss,  
And who of us knows of the frets and woes  
In the days when she mothered us?

## YOUTH

**D**ON'T you recall when apples grew,  
Oh, twice as big as now?  
When fish, however they were few,  
Were monster ones somehow?  
When Gaines's mill-dam made a roar  
As though the water hurled  
Were gathered in a mighty store  
From all the wide, wide world?

Don't you remember when the trees,  
The oak trees and the beech,  
Were lost in clouds on days like these  
And eyes could hardly reach  
Their waving tops? When noonday skies  
Were oh, such deeper blue?  
When Jack's great bean stalk in our eyes  
Just grew and grew and grew?

And there were bells, so more than fine,  
Of blue and white and red,  
Upon the morning glory vine  
That climbed up on the shed,  
To be a wonder and delight,  
So fresh and full of dew,  
To bud and open in a night —  
I see them now — don't you?

Don't you remember when the caves  
Were thick and full of gloom,  
Where captive maidens, once, like slaves,  
Were chained in some damp room?  
When twilight rustling in the brush  
Was some fierce beast? A cow  
It was, but cows at dusk are — Hush!  
I think I hear one now.

Come, take a little trip with me,  
Forget the things that fret,  
For you may close your eyes and see  
Some things that I forget.  
Why, I've seen Bluebeard's hidden room  
And Cinderella's shoe!  
And I have seen where violets bloom —  
So blue! So blue! So blue!

## AFTER THE YEARS

**W**HEN you went back to the old home place  
had the mountain become a hill?  
Had the raging river your boyhood knew  
shrunk down to a peaceful rill?  
Were the monster trees in the old front yard but half  
of their former size?  
Was something gone — and you don't know what —  
from the blue of the arching skies?  
Was the swimming-hole but a muddy pool when  
once it was crystal clear?  
Were the apples but half as big and red as they were  
in that other year?

When you went back to the old home place did the  
red barn seem so small  
It didn't look like the one you'd known? Was the  
mighty waterfall  
That used to roar in your boyish ears but a little dash  
of spray  
That fell so light you could hardly hear a dozen feet  
away?  
Were the corn rows only half as long as they were in  
the long ago,  
When you measured them with aching arms and the  
weight of a heavy hoe?



When you went back to the old home place had the  
mill pond dwindled down?

Was Main Street only a muddy track in the heart of  
a sleepy town?

And the well that was fathoms, fathoms deep, with  
its wheel and creaking chain,

Did it seem to you like a shrunken thing when you  
looked at it again?

Was something gone of the bygone days, from the  
sod and the arch of sky

That we used to see when we played as boys in the  
old days — you and I?

Nay, Heart, the mountain rises high as it did of yore;  
the rill

Was a river once and the boys near by see a raging  
river still.

The well is fathoms, fathoms deep and the apples  
ripe and red;

The sod is cool and green and soft, and the sky up  
overhead

Is blue and clear, and the days are rare and glad as  
they used to be —

But where is the Heart of the olden time — hast thou  
brought it back with thee?

## A VERSE TO MEMORY

**N**OW Memory, like a little child,  
Takes me by one soft hand.  
By dreams of keen delight beguiled  
We stray through Flowerland;  
And like the child, sweet Memory  
By many a by-way strays,  
Plucks flowers and bears them back to me  
To fashion my bouquets.

By many sweet, secluded ways  
She wanders, far or near;  
A rose upon my garland lays  
Bejeweled with a tear;  
The rose of some far-flown ideal,  
A fragrance, ah, how rare!  
My fingers close but to reveal  
The ashes crumbling there.

Now tinkling laughter ripples clear  
As some new flower she spies,  
Some far-forgotten joys appear  
As fairy faces rise.  
My thoughts in revel, flower-wreathed,  
Heart-full, my garlands lie,  
While on the scented air is breathed  
A greeting and good-bye.

Come, Child, away! The frolic ends,  
The flower in ashes, dead;  
The perfume with the air that blends  
We'll bear away instead.  
Here at the hedge we kiss and part,  
Some sterner duties find.  
Bear all the sweetness in the heart  
But leave the flowers behind.

Thank God, thank God for Memory,  
Half smile and half a tear;  
The flowers are there eternally,  
And when the days are drear,  
In through the tangled hedge of days  
We wander, hand in hand,  
And I may dream, while Memory strays,  
A child is Flowerland.

## LEST I FORGET

**W**HEN from my earliest abode in boyhood's  
merry days I strode,  
Oh, well do I remember how my mother  
came — I see her now —  
And, standing in the old front door, repeated to me  
o'er and o'er:

“Oh, William, don't do this and that, and William,  
wear your other hat.  
Please, William, don't forget my note, and William,  
wear your overcoat.  
And William, hurry on your way, or you'll be late  
to school today.”  
And far and long as I could hear her admonitions to  
my ear  
Came floating on, repeated yet, lest I forget, lest I  
forget.

When from my lessons, shirked or done, came home-  
ward I at waning sun,  
Oh, well do I remember how my mother came — I  
see her now —  
And greeted me at that front door with admonitions  
o'er and o'er:

“Oh, William, don't do this and that, and wipe your  
feet upon the mat,

And do not slam the door and wake the baby,  
William, and please take  
This package down to Howe and Hatch and tell them  
that it doesn't match,  
And don't forget to hurry back, because the kitchen  
fire is slack";  
And far and long as I could hear her admonitions to  
my ear  
Come floating on, repeated yet, lest I forget, lest I  
forget.

I'm married now — at man's estate, and yet, quite  
mournful to relate,  
My wife it is who, as before, comes with me to the  
new front door,  
And standing there, bombards me for a block or two,  
and o'er and o'er:

"Oh, William, don't you wet your feet, and William,  
don't forget the meat,  
And William, don't forget to mail my letter promptly,  
and don't fail  
To pay the ice bill, order wood; and William, would  
you be so good  
As to stop in at Jones's store and get a bit of ribbon  
for  
The baby's hair?" — and so 'tis yet — lest I forget  
— lest I forget!

## ECHO OF A SONG

**T**O my fancy, idly roaming, comes a picture  
of the gloaming,  
Comes a fragrance from the blossoms of the  
lilac and the rose;  
With the yellow lamplight streaming I am sitting  
here and dreaming  
Of a half-forgotten twilight whence a mellow mem-  
ory flows;  
To my listening ears come winging vagrant notes of  
woman's singing,  
I've a sense of sweet contentment as the sounds are  
borne along;  
'Tis a mother who is tuning her fond heart to love  
and crooning  
To her laddie such a  
Sleepy little,  
Creepy little,  
Song.

Ah, how well do I remember when by crackling spark  
and ember  
The old-fashioned oaken rocker moved with rhyth-  
mic sweep and slow;  
With her feet upon the fender, in a cadence low and  
tender,  
Floated forth that slumber anthem of a childhood  
long ago.

There were goblins in the gloaming and the half-  
closed eyes went roaming  
Through the twilight for the ghostly shapes of  
bugaboos along;  
Now the sandman's slyly creeping and a tired lad  
half sleeping  
When she sings to him that  
Sleepy little,  
Creepy little,  
Song.

I am sitting here and dreaming with the mellow lamp-  
light streaming  
Through the vine-embowered window in a yellow  
filigree;  
On the fragrant air come winging vagrant notes of  
woman's singing,  
'Tis the slumber song of childhood that is murmur-  
ing to me;  
And some subtle fancy creeping lulls my senses half  
to sleeping  
As the misty shapes of bugaboos go dreamily along,  
All my sorrows disappearing, as a tired lad I'm hear-  
ing  
Once again my mother's  
Sleepy little,  
Creepy little,  
Song.

## LOVERS' LANE

**H**OW good to remember Life's June from  
September,  
The days that were fairer than ever again;  
When hearts held no sorrow to last o'er the morrow  
And heads were brimful of the wisdom of ten;  
No skies were e'er bluer, no heart was e'er truer  
Than mine when I waited in sunshine or rain  
With joy that enriched me for one who bewitched me  
And bade me to wait till she came down the lane.

Our trysting-place gaining, my eyes they were strain-  
ing  
Afar down the road, and my lips hummed a tune  
That held all the sweetness of first love's complete-  
ness  
The whiles that I waited at morning and noon;  
For last when we parted, beloved, fond hearted,  
She pledged me to wait for her, sunshine or rain,  
And so I kept humming, I knew she was coming,  
A girl queen in gingham, somewhere down the  
lane.

And there with a vision of futures Elysian  
I traced both our names with my toe in the dust,  
And not a temptation could alter my station  
As knight of the faithful heart, true to its trust.





LOVER'S LANE



With ecstasy thrilling, I heard a far trilling  
So sweeter than bird song, and heard it again,  
The heart of the maiden, care-free and joy-laden,  
Was borne on the music I heard down the lane.

Ah, who knows the story of Life and its glory,  
The unending bliss of the days that were then;  
And who knows the sweetness of first love's completeness

Who has not the wisdom of thirteen and ten?  
For back went a trilling to her that was spilling  
Its burden of gladness through all of the air,  
With infinite yearning her message returning  
To show I was true and awaited her there.

Oh, hearts that are older, what secrets I told her!  
What dreams of the future, of grown girl and boy!  
For what of the weather, when two walk together  
The pathway to school in the heyday of joy?  
When hours are but measures of innocent pleasures,  
When days brim with gladness, as winecups to  
drain,  
When Life learns the sweetness of first love's completeness  
In waiting for Her as she comes down the lane!

## DADDY KNOWS

**L**ET us dry our tears now, laddie,  
Let us put aside our woes;  
Let us go and talk to daddy,  
For I'm sure that daddy knows.  
Let us take him what we've broken,  
Be it heart or hope or toy,  
And the tale may bide unspoken,  
For he used to be a boy.

He has been through all the sorrows  
Of a lad at nine or ten;  
He has seen the dawn of morrows  
When the sun shone bright again;  
His own heart has been near breaking,  
Oh, more times than I can tell,  
And has often known the aching  
That a boy's heart knows so well.

I am sure he well remembers,  
In his calendar of days,  
When the boy-heart was December's,  
Though the sun and flowers were May's.  
He has lived a boy's life, laddie,  
And he knows just how it goes;  
Let us go and talk to daddy,  
For I'm sure that daddy knows.

Let us tell him all about it,  
How the sting of it is there,  
And I have not any doubt it  
Will be easier to bear;  
For he's trodden every byway,  
He has fathomed every joy,  
He has traveled every highway  
In the wide world of a boy.

He will put aside the worries  
That his day may follow through,  
For the great heart of him hurries  
At the call for help from you.  
He will help us mend the broken  
Heart of ours or hope or toy,  
And the tale may bide unspoken —  
For he used to be a boy.

## TO CHILDREN AT THE HEARTH

**I**T is you, my dears, and the gladness  
You bring to the tasks to do,  
Who can lessen this old world's sadness  
By as much as the joy of you.  
It is you, my dears, and your glory  
Of sunshine and word and song  
Who can make life a sweeter story  
Wherever you smile along.

It is you, my dears, with your beauty  
And freshness of mind and heart  
Who must offer your share of duty  
And play yet a nobler part.  
For the world, it has need of beauty  
And youth that is fine and new,  
And the call you may hear to duty  
Is for you, my dears — just you.

It is you, my dears, that the sages  
Have written their counsels to,  
It is you, my dears, that the ages  
Leave legacies to — just you.  
And remember that every letter  
That Wisdom has graven through  
The years, so the world be better,  
Is for you, my dears — just you.

It is you who must be the bravest  
To fight, if the cause be true;  
It is you who must be the gravest  
In word and in deed — just you.  
It is you who must be the strongest  
To stand till the battle's through,  
And you who must smile the longest  
And never despair — just you.

It is you, my dears, and your glory  
Of gladness and youth and smile,  
Who shall help to say if the story  
Of life and the world's worth while.  
For the years of all time have shaped us,  
And the lore of the Ages, too,  
And to say if the Truth's escaped us  
Is for you, my dears — just you.

## A TOAST TO THE SMALL BOY

**H**E knows the vagrant country roads  
Where sleepily they wind;  
He has his pockets full of toads,  
His smile is broad and kind;  
His dreams of lands and seas — who knows?  
His joys are never still,  
And whistling through the world he goes,  
The rugged small boy — Bill!

His world is full of song and shine,  
His days are all his own;  
His nights are full of plans so fine  
That youngsters all have known;  
With all the joy that health can give  
His ruddy pulses thrill,  
And, bless me, how he loves to live,  
This rugged small boy — Bill!

His trousers know the ample patch,  
His shoes gape at the toes,  
But see him gladly toe the scratch  
For any chum he knows;  
The heart of him is good as gold,  
And songs of gladness spill  
From his red lips, this sunny-souled  
And rugged small boy — Bill!



His scratch-scarred legs are never tired,  
His eyes bright-souled and starred,  
His heart with hopeful youth is fired,  
His sunny soul unscarred;  
The world is his, the fields, the trees,  
The brook, the wood, the hill,  
To do his will, as he may please,  
This rugged small boy — Bill!

He knows the song of life by heart,  
In fancy he may weave  
Such dreams as make the pulses start,  
A King of Make-Believe;  
And when I speak with him I hear  
Truth ripple like a rill  
From him, and gladness and good cheer,  
This rugged small boy — Bill!

Oh, bide thee, bide thee, overlong,  
Health, happiness, and youth;  
Be glad thy heart and light thy song  
And pure and clear thy truth!  
Nor cloud to dim thy sunny ways,  
Nor aught to bring thee ill,  
And year on year of perfect days,  
My rugged small boy — Bill!

## AN ADVENTUROUS DAY

ONE time in vacation we boys all left town  
To stay in the country for Sunday; and  
down

By Deacon Gray's pasture a rabbit came out  
Right close to the highway and looked all about  
Until it saw us and it started to run  
Right down the highroad like a shot from a gun;  
So Billy Beggs threw off his coat and his hat  
And chased it till both of its ears were down flat,  
And, my, it just ran as if it saw a ghost,  
And Bill ran so fast that he caught it — almost!

And under the bridge where it crosses the creek  
We saw some fish swimming and darting as quick  
As a flash in the water, and one fish would flop  
Himself till he almost would come to the top;  
So then we got down on the bridge and we tied  
A pin on a string and dropped it down the side  
With a bug on the pin, and the fishes would look  
While Billy Beggs wiggled the bug on the hook;  
And one fish was hungry and came up so close  
That Bill gave a jerk and he caught it — almost!

And over by Skinner's a big hawk flew by  
And lit on a stump that was not very high,  
But didn't see us and we crawled up quite slow  
Through the grass to the stump with a big stone to  
throw;

And Billy Beggs said that the hawk was asleep  
For it never stirred once; and the grass was so deep  
That we got to within a few feet from the stump,  
And Billy Beggs peeked, and his heart gave a thump;  
And when he got ever and ever so close  
He stood up and threw and he hit it — almost!

And then it got cloudy and thundered and then  
It lightened just awful and thundered again;  
It rained some big drops and we started to run  
To get in the barn till the shower was done;  
And lightning just spattered and crackled and  
flashed

And we were all scared as could be, and we splashed  
All through mud and water, and then a big crack  
Of lightning came down and Bill Beggs hollered back  
From 'way up ahead, just as pale as a ghost,  
And said that last lightning had struck him — almost!

And over by Griggs's somebody came out  
And hollered to us when we're all just about  
So tired we could drop, and they took us right in  
By the big kitchen fire 'cause we're wet to the skin;  
And Mrs. Griggs gave us some blankets to wear  
While all of our clothes were hung over a chair;  
And she made some tea till she got us warmed through  
And then the storm stopped and the sky got all blue;  
And Billy Beggs told her the flash came so close  
That he 'membered the whole of the Lord's Prayer—  
almost!

## POEM OF THE FORAGERS

SCHOOL'S out, and homeward with the ebbing  
day

They come — Tom Jones, Jim Brooks and  
Eddie Gray;

And half a million others far or near,  
Not much unlike the boys I know right here;  
With empty dinnerpails and schoolbooks slung  
Across their shoulders by a strap. The tongue  
Of boyhood at the kitchen door gives cry:  
"Ma, can't I have a doughnut, or some pie?"  
For, say, the appetite of boys is prime  
And cannot be content till suppertime.

'Tis four o'clock, and I can hear them go —  
A million youngsters — homeward, fast and slow;  
The drowsy schoolroom clock has dragged its hands  
Across its face until Time's signal stands  
At long-awaited four — that blessed hour  
When schoolbooks close and teachers lose the power  
That despot rulers have — and flags unfurled  
Lead schoolboy armies to a waiting world!  
And up the back steps bound returning feet:  
"Ma, can't I go and get a bite to eat?"

School's out — what ransacking of cooky jars!  
What letting down of pantry gates and bars!

What dipping into barrels here and there,  
With heads far down and feet high up in air,  
For Winesaps, Baldwins, Pippins! What a charge  
Upon the jars of jam and loaves baked large  
And round and brown — what a tumultuous cry:  
“Ma, can’t I have a little piece of pie?”  
And so this schoolboy army waxes fat  
Upon its foraged commissariat!

**T**HANKS are due to the Editors of The Saturday Evening Post, The Century Magazine, The New York Times, and The Youth's Companion, in which papers the greater number of these verses originally appeared, for permission to reprint.













